

Substance Drug Checking

Preliminary Results for October 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 October 2025.

Highlighted findings:

- The median fentanyl concentration found across all drug categories was 7.3%
- The median fluorofentanyl concentration found across all drug categories was 2.6%
- The median ortho-methyl fentanyl concentration found across all drug categories was 1.5%
- Benzodiazepines were found in 43.2% (98/227) of expected Opioid - Down samples
 - Bromazolam was found in 66 Opioid - Down samples with a median concentration of 3.0% and a maximum concentration of greater than 50.0%
- Xylazine was found in 16 expected Opioid - Down samples with a median concentration of 2.4% and a maximum concentration of 16.8%
- Medetomidine was found in 17 expected Opioid - Down samples with a median concentration of 0.6% and a maximum concentration of 3.4%
- Nitazenes were found in 6 Opioid - Down samples, N-desethyl etonitazene was found in 4 samples and metonitazene was found in 2 samples

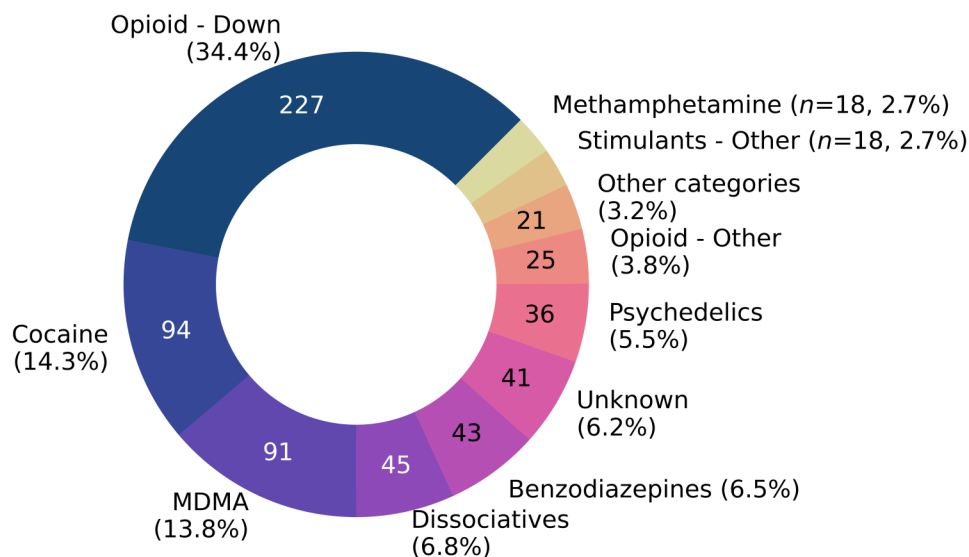
659

Samples Tested
October 2025

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

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.

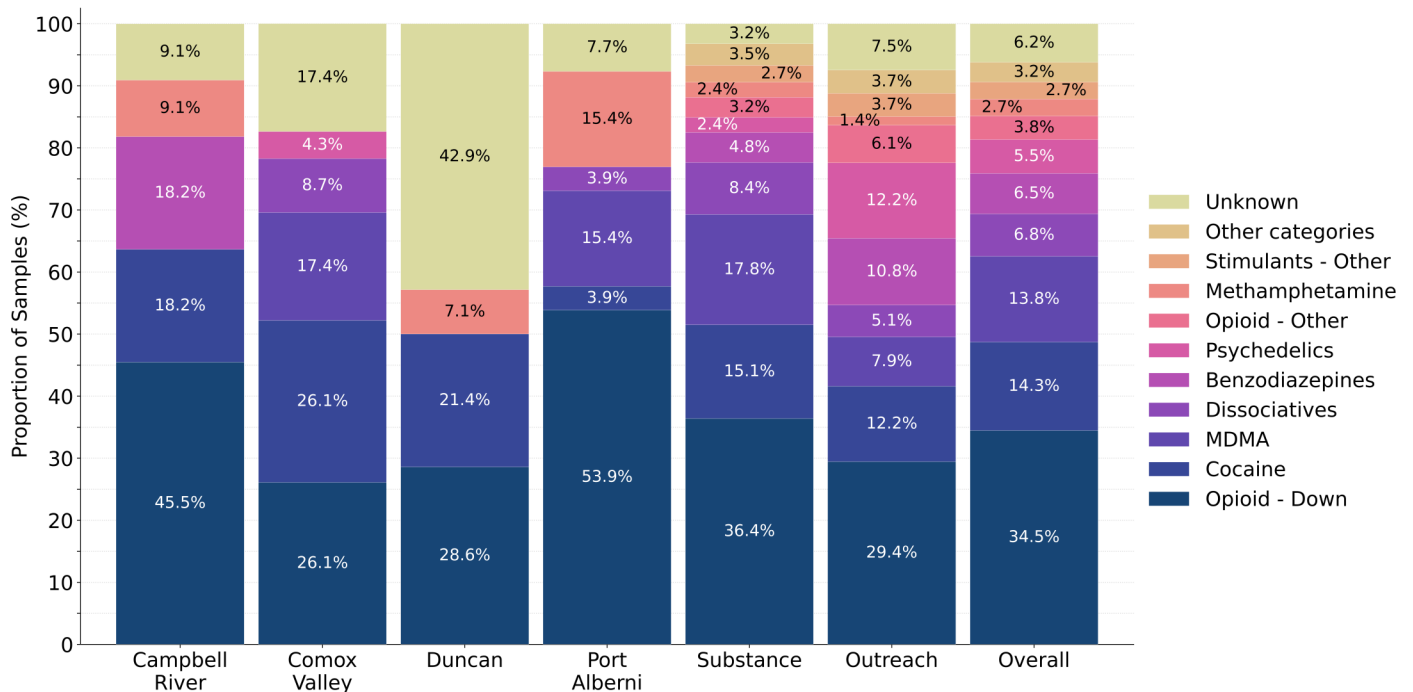


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What were people bringing to be checked by service model?

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.



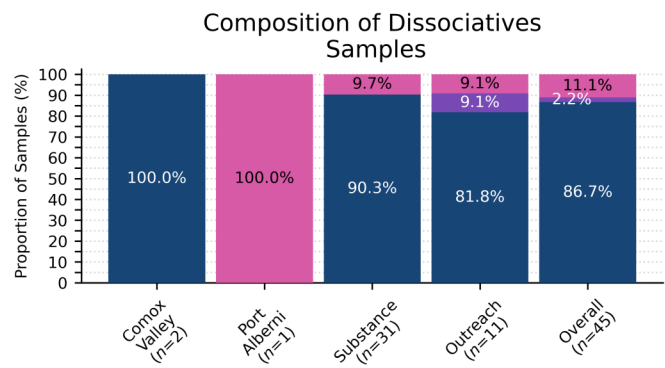
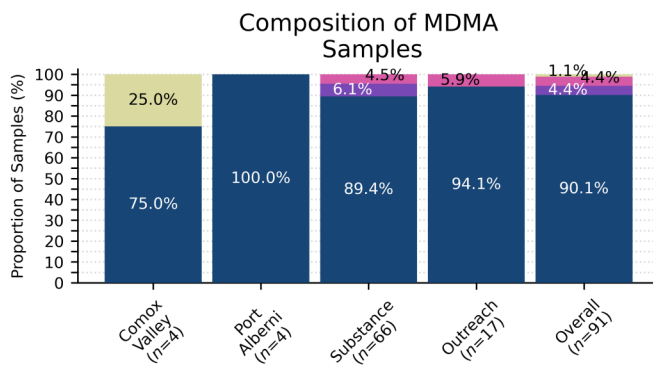
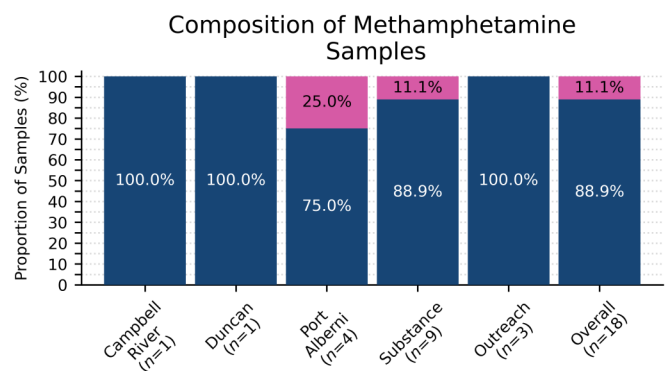
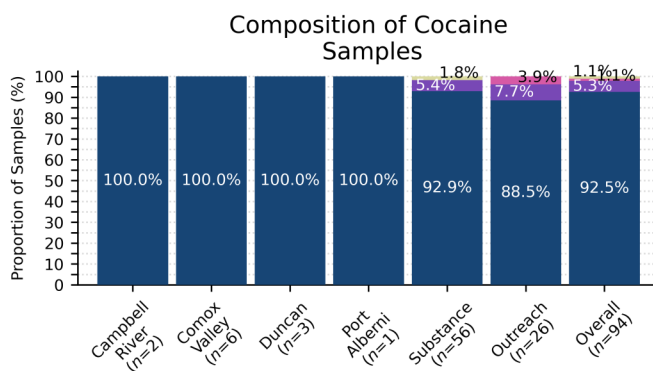
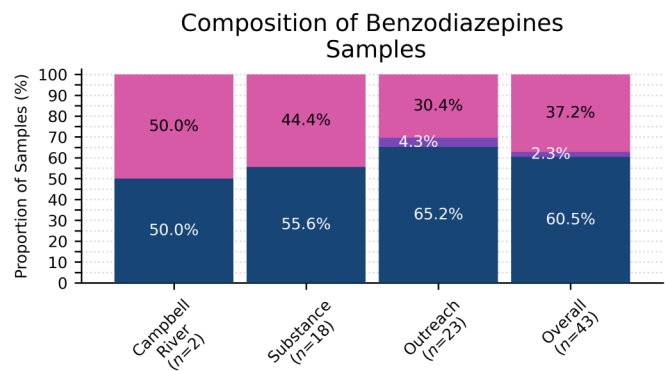
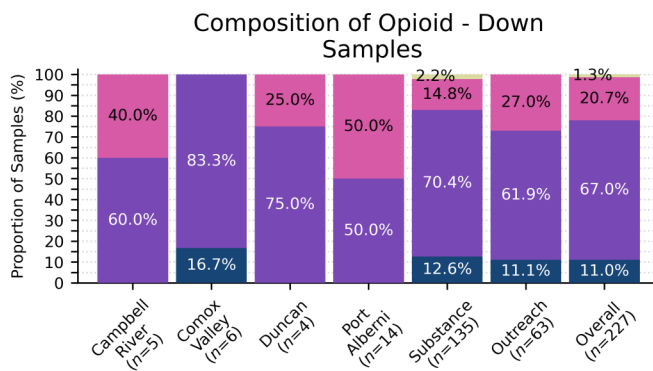
Expected Substance Class	Campbell River	Comox Valley	Duncan	Port Alberni	Port Hardy	Substance	Outreach	Overall
Opioid - Down	5	6	4	14	0	135	63	227
Cocaine	2	6	3	1	0	56	26	94
MDMA	0	4	0	4	0	66	17	91
Dissociatives	0	2	0	1	0	31	11	45
Benzodiazepines	2	0	0	0	0	18	23	43
Psychedelics	0	1	0	0	0	9	26	36
Opioid - Other	0	0	0	0	0	12	13	25
Methamphetamine	1	0	1	4	0	9	3	18
Stimulants - Other	0	0	0	0	0	10	8	18
Other categories	0	0	0	0	0	13	8	21
Unknown	1	4	6	2	0	12	16	41
Total	11	23	14	26	0	371	214	659

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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 October 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			17	7
Fentanyl		1			17	7
Expected* + Unexpected Active(s)	3	5	3	7	95	39
Acetaminophen [Tylenol]					1	
Acetylcodeine					5	4
Acetylmorphine [MAM, 6-MAM]					13	7
Benzodiazepine (unknown type) ¹		1	1		5	3
Bromazolam	1	1	2	5	34	14
Carfentanil					1	1
Cocaine HCl [powder]					1	
Codeine [T3's / T4's]					2	
Desalkylgidazepam		1		3	2	1
Ethylbromazolam		1				1
Etizolam						1
Fentanyl	3	5	3	7	91	36
Flubromazepam	2					
Fluorofentanyl	2	3	2	4	69	22
Gabapentin					1	
Heroin					13	7
Medetomidine	2	1			1	5
Methamphetamine			1			4
Metonitazene [Metonitazine]					4	
Morphine					2	
N-desethyl etonitazene					2	
Phenazolam [Clobromazolam]						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 "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	Comox Valley	Duncan	Port Alberni	Substance	Outreach
Expected* + Unexpected Active(s)	3	5	3	7	95	39
Unknown					1	
Xylazine				1	5	6
ortho-Methyl fentanyl				1	24	7
Unexpected Active(s) Only	2		1	7	20	17
Acetylcodeine					4	
Acetylmorphine [MAM, 6-MAM]					4	
Benzodiazepine (unknown type) ¹				1		1
Bromazepam	1				4	4
Carfentanil				1	1	1
Desalkylgidazepam					1	2
Ethylbromazepam				4		3
Fentanyl					1	
Fentanyl or analogue ¹				1		
Fluorofentanyl	2		1	6	13	16
Heroin					4	
Hydromorphone [Dilaudid]					1	
Medetomidine				4		4
Methamphetamine						1
Morphine					4	
Xylazine					2	2
ortho-Methyl fentanyl					1	

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MDMA	Comox Valley	Port Alberni	Substance	Outreach
Expected Active Only	3	4	59	16
MDA			3	2
MDMA	3	4	58	15
Expected* + Unexpected Active(s)			4	
MDMA* + Ketamine			1	
MDMA* + MDA			2	
MDMA* + Unknown			1	
Unexpected Active(s) Only			3	1
3,4-MDMA methylene homolog HCl			1	
MDA			1	
MDMA			1	1

Cocaine	Campbell River	Comox Valley	Duncan	Port Alberni	Substance	Outreach
Expected Active Only	2	6	3	1	52	23
Cocaine Base [crack, rock, hard]	2	1	2	1	8	2
Cocaine HCl [powder]		5	1		44	21
Expected* + Unexpected Active(s)					3	2
Cocaine HCl [powder]* + Fentanyl						1
Cocaine HCl [powder]* + Levamisole					1	
Cocaine HCl [powder]* + Phenacetin					1	1
Cocaine Base [crack]* + Fentanyl or analogue ¹					1	
Unexpected Active(s) Only						1
Bromazolam, Fentanyl, Methamphetamine						1

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Benzodiazepines	Campbell River	Substance	Outreach
Expected Active Only	1	10	15
Alprazolam [Xanax]		2	2
Bretazenil			2
Bromazolam		2	2
Desalkylgidazepam			1
Diazepam [Valium]	1		2
Etizolam		2	3
Flualprazolam		1	3
Lorazepam [Ativan]		3	
Expected* + Unexpected Active(s)			1
Benzodiazepine (unknown type) ^{1,*} + Unknown			1
Unexpected Active(s) Only	1	8	7
Benzodiazepine (unknown type) ¹		1	1
Bromazolam		4	3
Clonazepam [Klonopin]	1		
Desalkylgidazepam		1	1
Ethylbromazolam			1
Etizolam			1
Fentanyl		2	
Fluorofentanyl		2	
Rilmazafone		1	
Unknown			1

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Opioid - Other	Substance	Outreach
Expected Active Only	9	8
Acetaminophen [Tylenol]	2	4
Hydromorphone [Dilaudid]	2	
Opium		1
Oxycodone [Oxycontin]	5	7
SR-17018	1	
Unexpected Active(s) Only	2	5
Fentanyl or analogue ¹		1
Fluorofentanyl	2	3
N-Propionitrile Chlorphine		1
Unknown Composition	1	
Unknown	1	

Dissociatives	Comox Valley	Port Alberni	Substance	Outreach
Expected Active Only	2		28	9
2-FXiPr			1	
Fluorexetamine [FXE]			1	
Ketamine	2		26	9
Expected* + Unexpected Active(s)				1
Fluorexetamine [FXE]* + O-PCE [Deschloro-N-ethyl-ketamine]				1
Unexpected Active(s) Only		1	3	1
3-CMC [Clrophedrone]				1
Arylcyclohexylamine (unknown type)			1	
MDMA		1	2	

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Methamphetamine	Campbell River	Duncan	Port Alberni	Sub-stance	Outreach
<i>Expected Active Only</i>	1	1	3	8	3
Methamphetamine	1	1	3	8	3
<i>Unexpected Active(s) Only</i>			1	1	
Cocaine Base [crack]				1	
Ketamine			1		

Psychedelics	Comox Valley	Substance	Outreach
<i>Expected Active Only</i>		8	23
2C-B		4	8
3C-P			1
4-AcO-DMT [O-Acetylpsilocin]		1	
4-PrO-DMT			1
5-MeO-DMT			1
5-MeO-MiPT [Moxy]		1	
5F-MET [Bretisillocin]			1
Cocaine HCl [powder]			1
DMT [Dimethyltryptamine]			3
Ibogaine			1
Ketamine		1	2
LSD [acid]			3
MDMA		1	2
Mescaline		1	2
<i>Expected* + Unexpected Active(s)</i>	1		1
2C-B* + Cocaine HCl, Ketamine			1
2C-B* + Cocaine HCl, Phenacetin	1		
<i>Unexpected Active(s) Only</i>		1	1
4-MMC [Mephedrone]			1
Bromazolam		1	
Unknown		1	

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Other	Substance	Outreach
Expected Active Only	12	8
3-CMC [Clophedrone]	1	
4-FA [4-Fluoroamphetamine]		1
4-MMC [Mephedrone]	3	2
Acetaminophen [Paracetamol, Tylenol]	3	
Amphetamine	1	3
GHB	4	1
Pregabalin		1
Expected* + Unexpected Active(s)	3	1
3-CMC [Clophedrone]* + Unknown	1	
4-MMC [Mephedrone]* + Cathinone (unknown type)	1	
Medetomidine* + Unknown		1
Tadalafil [Cialis]* + Sildenafil [Viagra]	1	
Unexpected Active(s) Only	4	4
2-MMC	1	
4-MMC [Mephedrone]		1
Etizolam	1	1
Methamphetamine	2	1
Trenbolone enanthate		1

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Unknown	Campbell River	Comox Valley	Duncan	Port Alberni	Sub-stance	Outreach
Unexpected Active(s) Only	1	1	2	1	8	9
2-MMC						1
2C-B						1
3-MMC [Metaphedrone]					1	
4-CMC [Clephedrone]						1
Acetylcodeine	1					
Acetylmorphine [MAM, 6-MAM]	1					
Benzodiazepine (unknown type) ¹						1
Bromazolam			1			2
Cocaine HCl [powder]				1	2	
Ethylbromazolam			1			
Fentanyl			2		1	1
Fluorofentanyl			2		1	1
Heroin	1					
Ketamine					2	1
MDA					1	
MDMA					1	1
Medetomidine			1			
Methamphetamine		1			2	2
ortho-Methyl fentanyl					1	
Unknown Composition					1	
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. ¹“Benzodiazepine (unknown type)” results are based on a positive strip test and are unconfirmed by paper spray.

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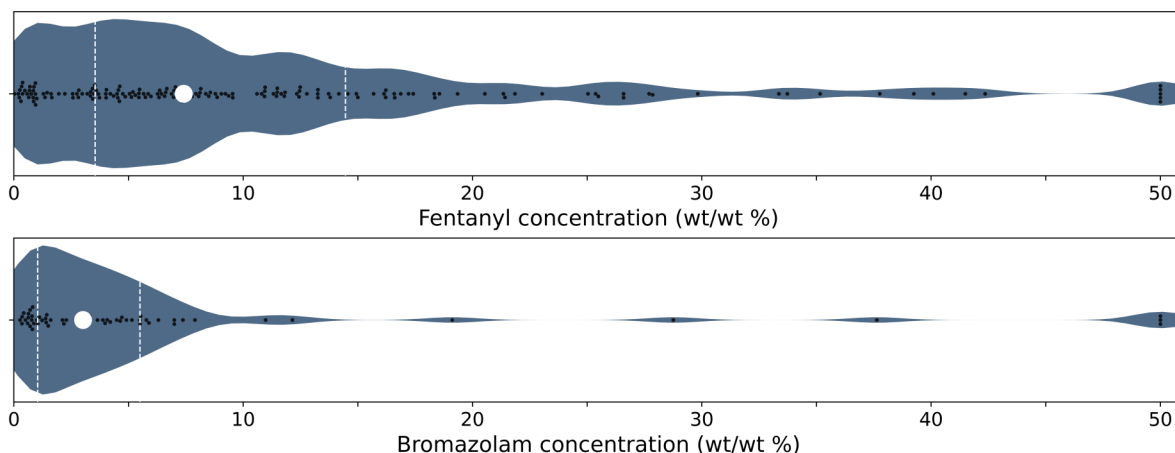
Quantification

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	176	7.3%	<0.1%	>50.0%*	3.5% - 13.7%
Fluorofentanyl	144	2.8%	<0.1%	>50.0%*	1.1% - 10.7%
Bromazolam	80	2.7%	0.2%	>50.0%*	0.9% - 5.2%
ortho-Methyl fentanyl	34	1.5%	<0.1%	12.2%	0.7% - 2.7%
Acetylmorphine	25	2.1%	0.2%	>50.0%*	0.5% - 4.3%
Heroin	22	2.0%	0.3%	>50.0%*	1.0% - 4.5%
Medetomidine	19	0.7%	0.3%	>50.0%*	0.5% - 1.6%
Xylazine	16	2.4%	<0.1%	16.8%	0.4% - 7.1%
Acetylcodeine	13	1.1%	<0.1%	6.4%	0.5% - 2.1%
Oxycodone (Oxycontin)	12	5.3%	<0.1%	33.7%	0.8% - 12.5%
Desalkylgidazepam	12	4.0%	0.4%	19.3%	0.8% - 6.5%
Etizolam	7	0.6%	0.2%	1.2%	0.4% - 0.9%
Carfentanil	5	0.2%	0.1%	0.5%	0.1% - 0.5%

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 and focuses only on fentanyl, fluorofentanyl, carfentanil, ortho-methyl fentanyl, 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 80% (4/5) benzo-positive	Bromazolam	2		3.9%	6.3%	
	Fentanyl	3	7.9%	4.0%	18.4%	
	Fluorofentanyl	3	4.5%	1.5%	13.3%	
Comox Valley 6 total down samples 67% (4/6) benzo-positive	Bromazolam	1		13.3%		
	Fentanyl	5	11.4%	7.0%	35.2%	7.3% - 29.8%
	Fluorofentanyl	2		0.8%	7.3%	
Duncan 4 total down samples 75% (3/4) benzo-positive	Bromazolam	2		0.4%	2.8%	
	Fentanyl	3	5.7%	2.6%	7.3%	
	Fluorofentanyl	3	2.3%	0.2%	7.3%	
Port Alberni 14 total down samples 86% (12/14) benzo-positive	Bromazolam	5	2.2%	0.7%	5.5%	1.1% - 3.3%
	Carfentanil	1		0.1%		
	Fentanyl	7	4.6%	2.2%	33.7%	4.1% - 17.0%
	Fluorofentanyl	10	13.3%	0.3%	16.6%	7.8% - 14.7%
	Xylazine	1		1.0%		
	ortho-Methyl fentanyl	1		0.6%		
Substance 135 total down samples 33% (45/135) benzo-positive	Bromazolam	38	2.7%	0.3%	>50.0%*	1.1% - 5.0%
	Carfentanil	2		0.2%	0.5%	
	Fentanyl	107	7.4%	0.2%	>50.0%*	4.0% - 15.3%
	Fluorofentanyl	80	2.7%	0.2%	>50.0%*	1.4% - 10.7%
	Xylazine	7	4.9%	1.0%	16.8%	2.4% - 7.0%
	ortho-Methyl fentanyl	25	1.5%	0.5%	12.2%	1.1% - 4.1%
Outreach 63 total down samples 48% (30/63) benzo-positive	Bromazolam	18	4.6%	0.3%	>50.0%*	1.4% - 7.8%
	Carfentanil	2		0.1%	0.5%	
	Fentanyl	43	7.6%	<0.1%	40.1%	1.4% - 13.3%
	Fluorofentanyl	38	2.4%	<0.1%	44.2%	0.8% - 4.6%
	Xylazine	8	0.3%	<0.1%	9.0%	0.1% - 7.7%
	ortho-Methyl fentanyl	7	1.5%	<0.1%	6.6%	0.7% - 1.7%

*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 October, our staff handled 840 of these interactions, in addition to, checking 659 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 October 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



NSERC Canada



SOLID Outreach



University of Victoria



Vancouver Island University



Victoria Hospitals Foundation



Vancouver Foundation



Westgrid

