

Drug Checking in British Columbia April 2019

This report summarizes key indicators for Fourier Transform Infrared (FT-IR)/fentanyl test strip combination drug checking done in British Columbia in April 2019.

As the FT-IR spectrometer has a detection limit of 3-4% by weight (Sherman et al., 2018), unless otherwise stated, a drug check on any given sample consists of **both** Bruker ALPHA Fourier-Transform Infrared (FT-IR) spectrometer **and** BTNX fentanyl immunoassay test strip testing done in combination. When applicable, BTNX benzodiazepine or lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) immunoassay test strips are also used.

Please note that these data are not finalized and are subject to change.

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the following partners:

- ANKORS
- ASK Wellness Society
- Lookout Society
- Karmik
- Fraser Health
- Interior Health
- Vancouver Coastal Health

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- In April 2019, 610 drug checks were completed on samples in British Columbia
 - 503 drug checks were completed in Vancouver Coastal Health region
 - 27 drug checks were completed in Fraser Health region
 - 80 drug checks were completed in Interior Health Region
 - The majority of samples tested were expected by clients to be either opioids (330 or 54.1%), psychedelics (134 or 22.0%), or stimulants (101 or 16.6%)

Depressant may include: benzodiazepines, GHB, zopiclone

Opioid may include: “down,” heroin, fentanyl, fentanyl analogues, pharmaceutical opioids

Polysubstance includes: cross-category mixtures

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

Stimulant may include: “speed”, crystal meth, cocaine, cathinones

Unknown includes: all samples in which the client could not identify the expected substance

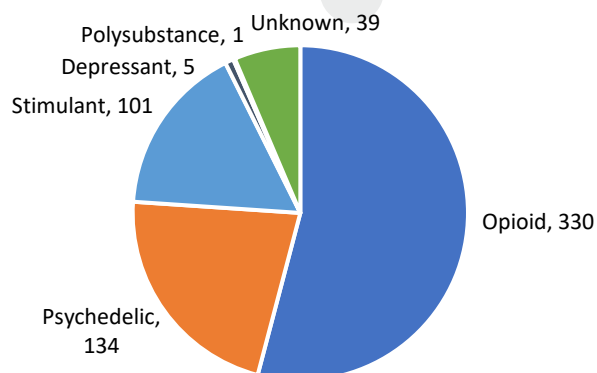


Figure 1. Number of drug checks performed in BC in April 2019, by expected drug category

Table 1. Number of samples that matched client expectation using FTIR/test strip drug checking in British Columbia in April 2019, by expected drug category

	Depressant	Opioid	Psychedelic	Stimulant	Polysubstance	Unknown	Total
True	3	296	123	100	1	0	
False	1	34	8	0	0	0	
N/A	1	0	3	1	0	39	
Total	5	330	134	101	1	39	610

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

Table 2. Number of opioid samples that matched client expectation using FTIR/test strip drug checking in British Columbia in April 2019, by expected drug

	Fentanyl	Heroin	Fentanyl & Heroin	Fentanyl analogue	Opium	Pharmaceutical	'Down'*	Total
True	242	20	7	1	0	0	26	296
False	19	5	3	1	0	0	6	34
N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	261	25	10	2	0	0	32	330

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



- 168 opioid samples (50.1%) tested positive for fentanyl using the FT-IR spectrometer
- **The total fentanyl positivity rate in opioid samples was 88.2%**
- Of the 101 stimulant samples, 1 (1.0%) tested positive for fentanyl
- Of the 134 psychedelic samples, 0 (0.0%) tested positive for fentanyl

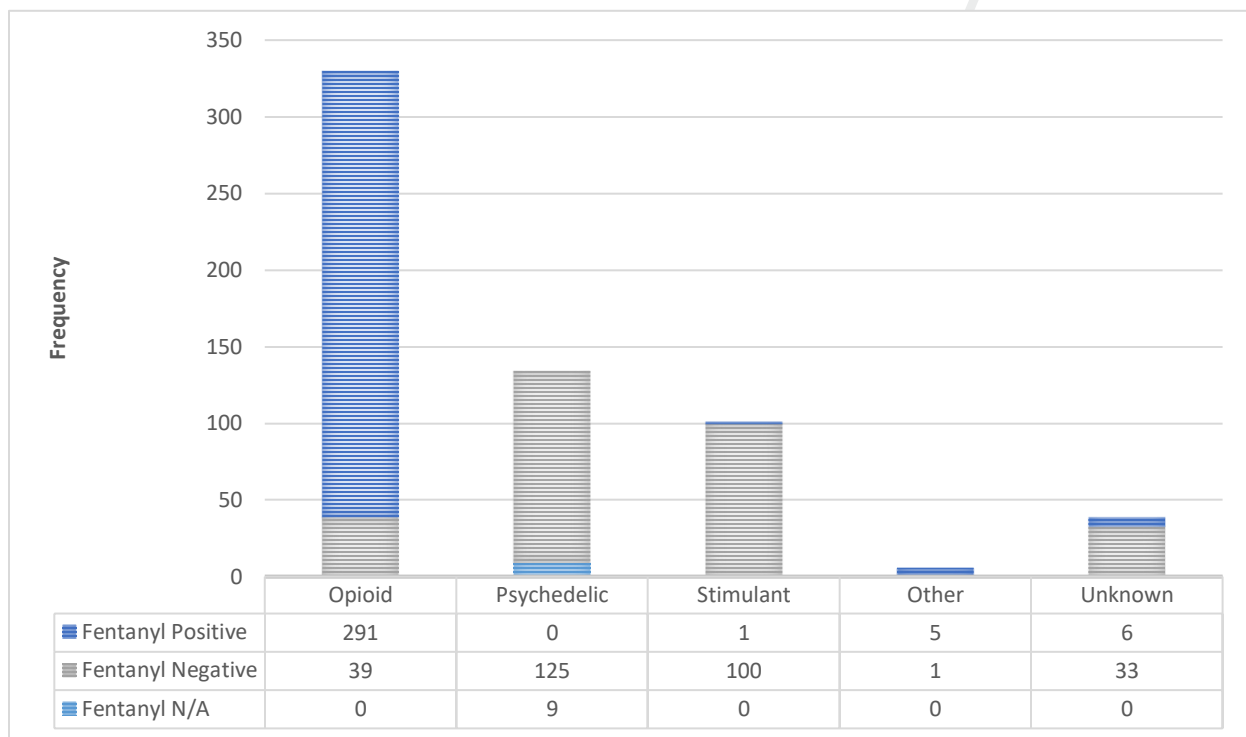


Figure 2. Number of drug checking samples that tested positive and negative for fentanyl in British Columbia, in April 2019, by expected drug category

Table 3. Public health notifications of drug checking results in British Columbia in April 2019

Date & Location	Expected Drug	FT-IR Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Lab Analysis	Outcome
9-Apr 2019 MOPS	Heroin	Heroin with approx. 25% Dextromethorphan	Negative	N/A	RADAR alert
16-Apr 2019 Kamloops	Heroin	Heroin & AMB-FUBINACA	Positive	N/A	IHA Alert
17-Apr 2019 Insite	Cocaine	Cocaine with approx. 25% Methamphetamine	Negative	N/A	RADAR alert

For more immediate notifications of concerning drug checking results, subscribe to VCH’s Real-time Drug Alert and Response System (RADAR) by texting “alert” to (236) 999-DOPE (3673)

