

BRITISH COLUMBIA
CENTRE ON
SUBSTANCE USE

Networking researchers, educators & care providers



Data to action: Tackling the Opioid Crisis Drug Checking Services in BC

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BCCSU

Spring Education Symposium
BCHIMPS
March 1, 2019

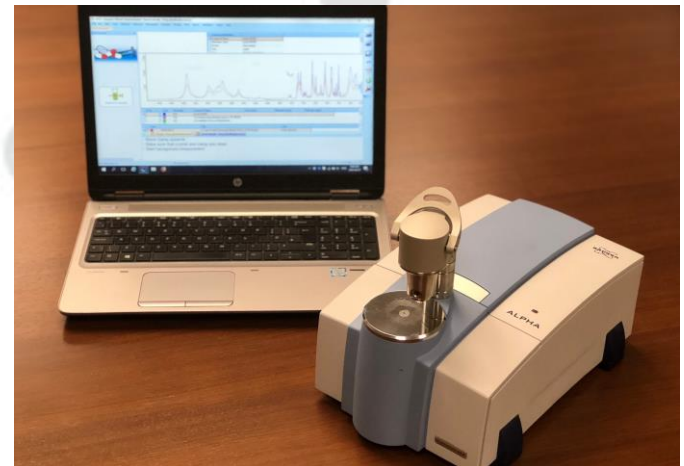


BCCSU Drug Checking Services Pilot

- Initiated at Insite on October 31st, 2017 (CoV and Health Canada SUAP funding)
- Currently running at Insite, MOPS (Vancouver) & SafePoint (Surrey) and pop-up festivals/events
- Additional non-BCCSU partners drug checking sites:
 - ASK Wellness (Kelowna)
 - ANKORS (Nelson)
 - Vancouver Coastal Health (2 sites)
 - Future expansion to Nanaimo and other areas in BC

Methods

- Technology - Fourier Transform Infrared (FT-IR) spectrometer + fentanyl immunoassay test strips
- Electronic data capture system across sites
- Limited # of samples sent to labs for further analysis using advanced methods



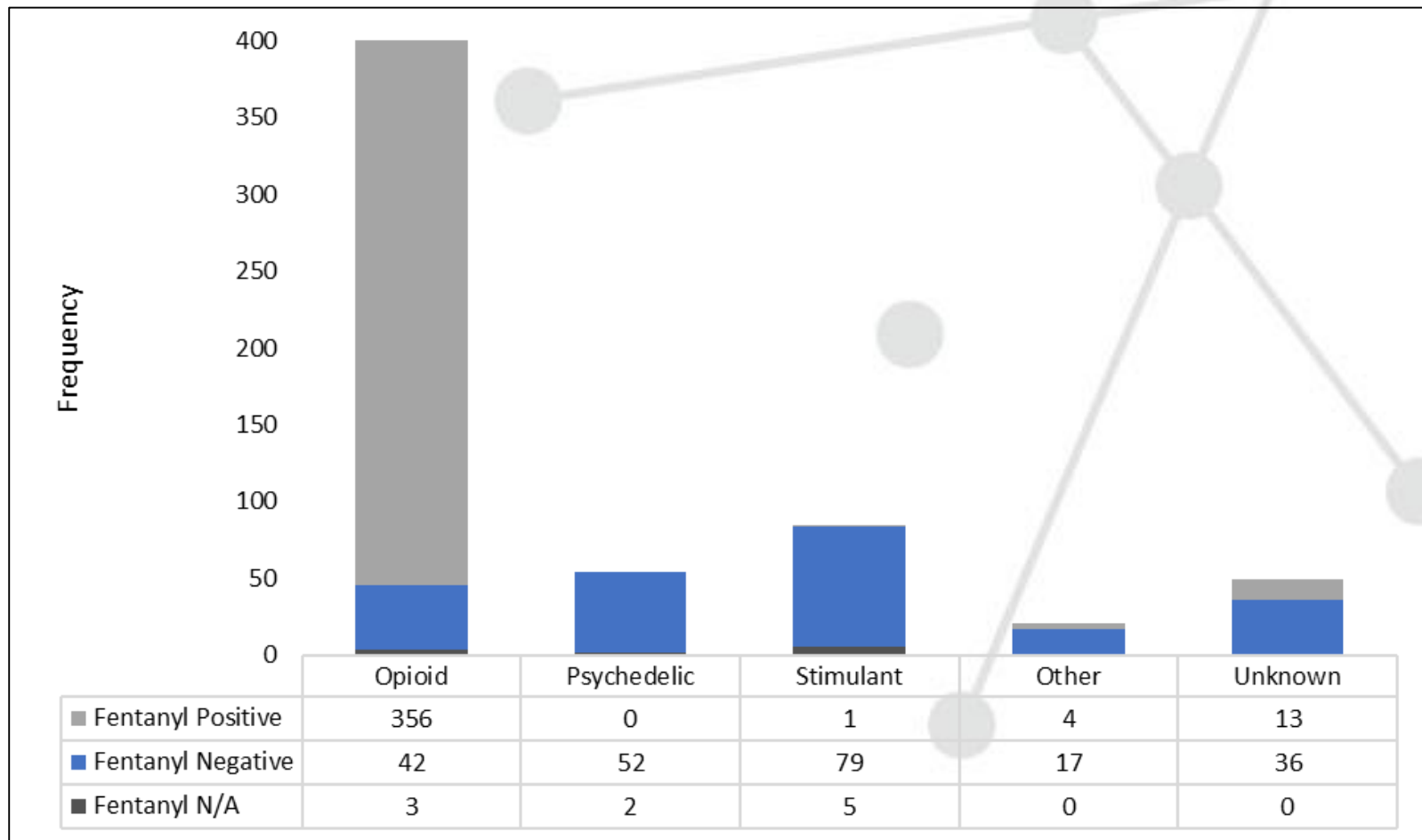
FT-IR and testing strips technologies

- What can we do/detect:
 - Up to 2-3 main components and relative proportions
 - Cutter agents used as fillers/buffers
- FT-IR cannot detect substances in small amounts (less than 5%)
 - Testing strips 0.95 sensitivity and 0.91 specificity values (early results)
- Limited detection restricted to our FT-IR library
 - New or rare substances might not show
- We cannot differentiate between fentanyl analogs
 - Carfentanyl only possible to identify by confirmatory testing

Data Collection

- Generate non-identifiable data across all sites in near real time service provision
- Number of drug checking services by region, type of drug, color and shape
 - Opioids, Stimulants, Psychedelics, etc.
- Measure client drug expectation
 - Bought = Tested sample
- % of samples tested positive for fentanyl
- Record pre/post substance use to measure change in behavior

Data Examples



Number of drug checking samples that tested positive and negative for fentanyl in British Columbia, in January 2019

Early results in academic literature

Drug and Alcohol Dependence 190 (2018) 242–245



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Drug and Alcohol Dependence

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/drugalcdep



Short communication

Initial results of a drug checking pilot program to detect fentanyl adulteration in a Canadian setting



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Canadian Journal of Public Health

<https://doi.org/10.17269/s41997-018-0126-6>

INNOVATIONS IN POLICY AND PRACTICE



Drug checking at an electronic dance music festival during the public health overdose emergency in British Columbia

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Received: 8 March 2018 / Accepted: 21 August 2018

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Tackling the Opioid Crisis

- Opportunities:
 - First provincial drug checking program in Canada
 - High interest among community partners, health authorities, other stakeholders
 - Impact on the road toward a safe supply
- Linking Datasets:
 - Analyze OD trends in comparison to testing
 - Early warning system of drug trends

Future Plans and Challenges

- Future Plans:
 - Consolidation of electronic records system
 - Generate regular reporting to participating sites
 - Expansion of the service to other areas
- Challenges:
 - Need to have enough personnel to expand service hours (weekends)
 - Reach people who do not use SCS
 - Fentanyl not always easy to detect using FTIR



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