

testRI: Communicating Changes in the Rhode Island Local Drug Supply

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INTRODUCTION

- Data shows that people who use drugs (PWUD) want to know what their drugs contain and will engage in safer drug use practices in response.
- However, our understanding of street-level market changes and how these changes impact people who use drugs (PWUD) in real-time is inadequate.
- We sought to test drug samples to determine what most common adulterants are seen in the local Rhode Island (RI) drug supply.

METHODS

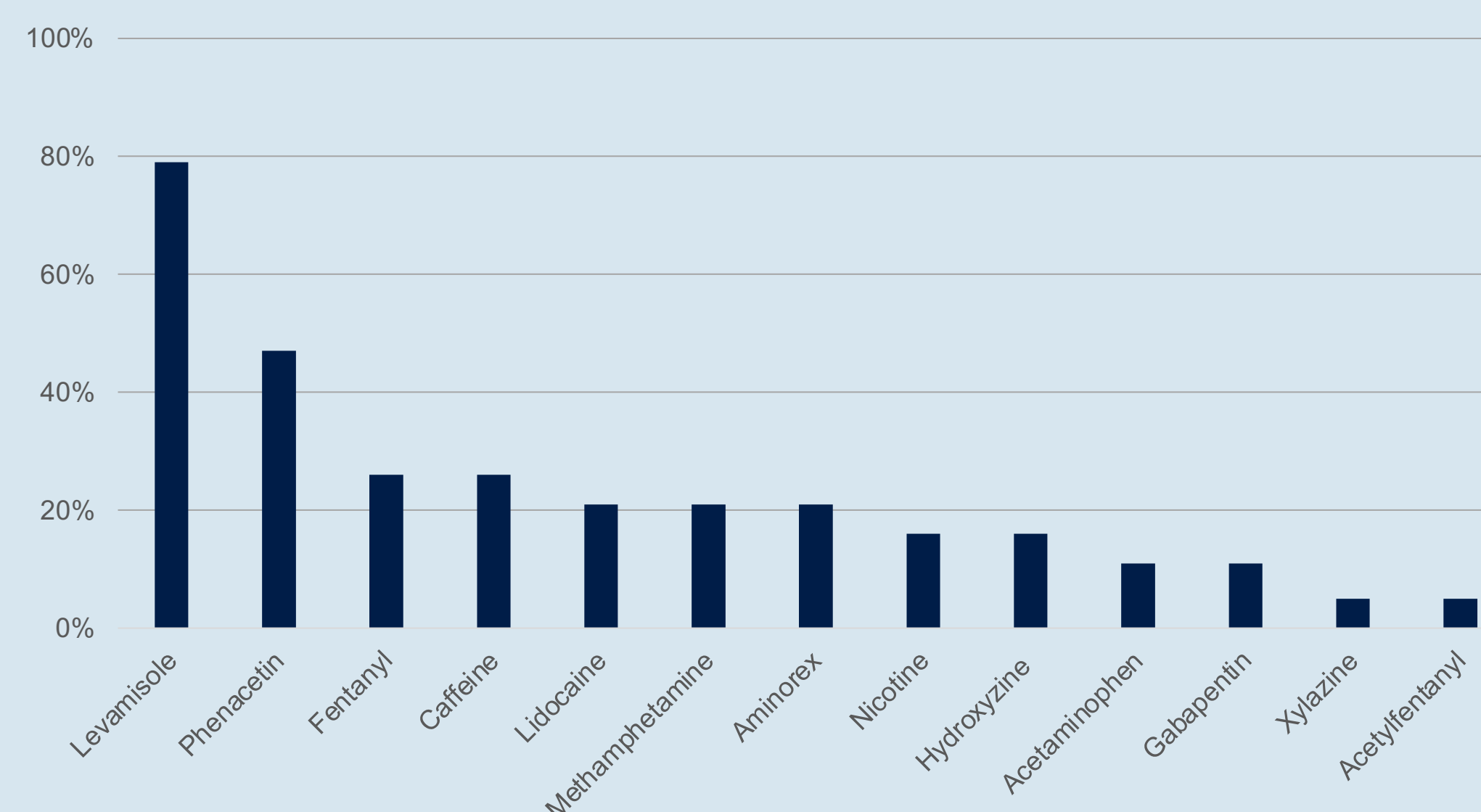
- Tested 71 drug samples sold as opioids (i.e., heroin, fentanyl, or Percocet) or cocaine (i.e., crack or powder) over a five-month period in 2022
- Samples included substances, baggies, and used equipment (e.g., cookers, cottons). All testing was conducted at the RI Hospital Toxicology Laboratory via LC-QTOF-MS comprehensive toxicology screen
- Results were rapidly disseminated to study participants and through collaboration with the Rhode Island Department of Health and community partners across platforms to maximize reach of findings
- Samples obtained from study participants, medical outreach, anonymous donations, and community partners

RESULTS

Common adulterants found in 52 opioid samples (fentanyl major component in 100%)



Common adulterants found in 19 cocaine samples (cocaine major component in 100%)



CONCLUSION

- The contamination of substances in the local drug supply creates higher risk for overdose for PWUD
- Through this testing effort we were able to identify fentanyl analog and xylazine adulteration of opioid samples and document fentanyl presence in both methamphetamine and cocaine drug samples
- Partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Health and community outreach organizations enabled us to rapidly disseminate this information across multiple platforms to the local community including to PWUD, outreach teams, health care providers, and the public
- Local advanced drug supply testing and surveillance programs create the ability to rapidly share information to improve community health through harm reduction messaging

AUTHORS & DISCLOSURES

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