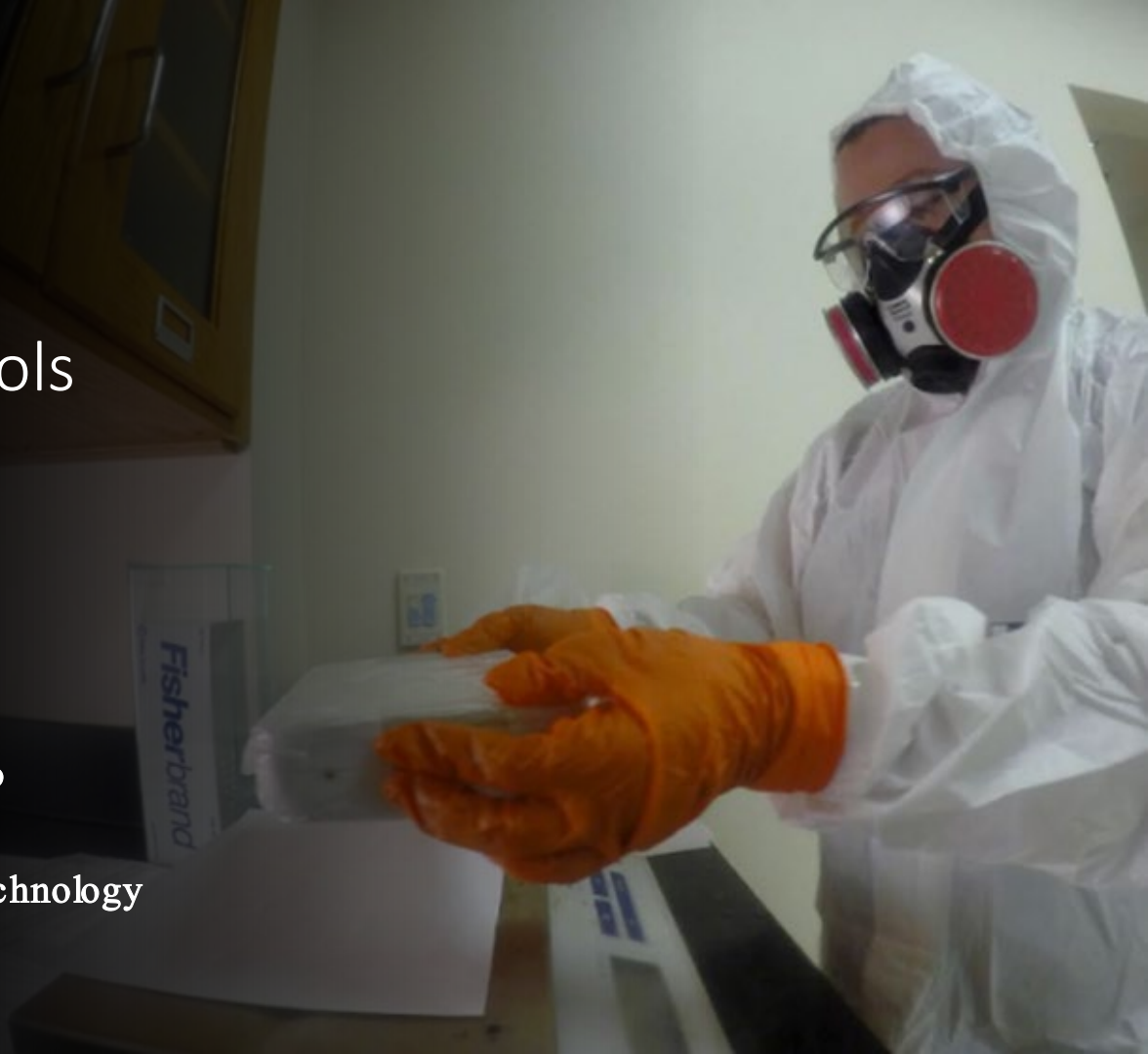




# Using Visualization Tools to Understand Drug Evidence Handling Processes

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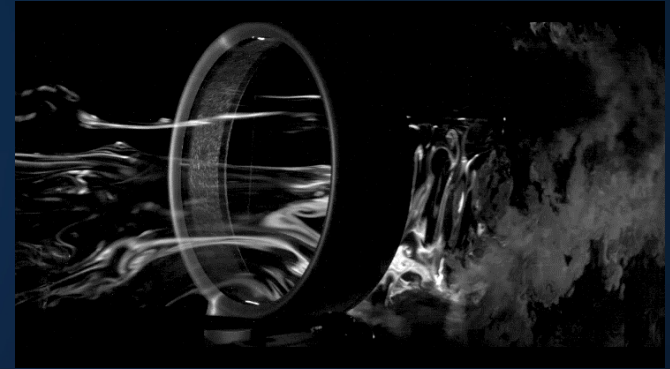
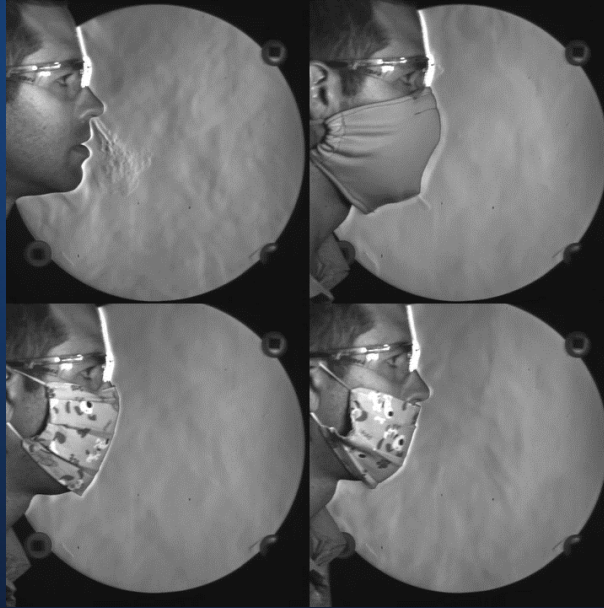
**Matthew Staymates and Edward Sisco**  
**Material Measurement Laboratory**  
**National Institute of Standards and Technology**





# Quick background – flow visualization and scientific imaging

Many uses in the Surface and Trace Chemical Analysis Group, NIST

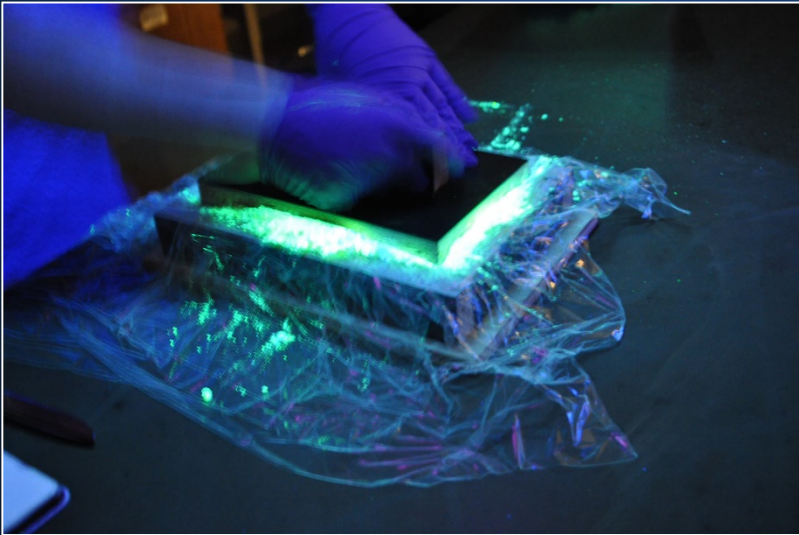


Schlieren imaging, high speed videography, laser-sheet imaging



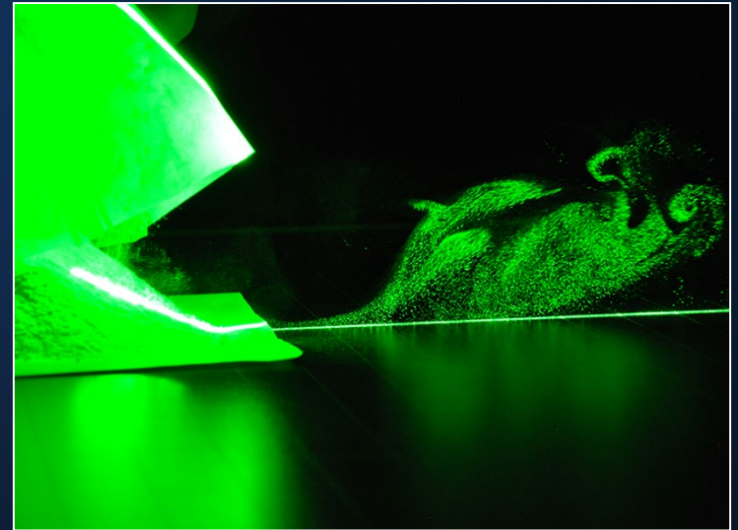
# Two visualization methods

## Fluorescent powder handling and visualization



Created fluorescently tagged, mock drug evidence and had examiners handle it as they normally would. Recorded the entire process under a blacklight

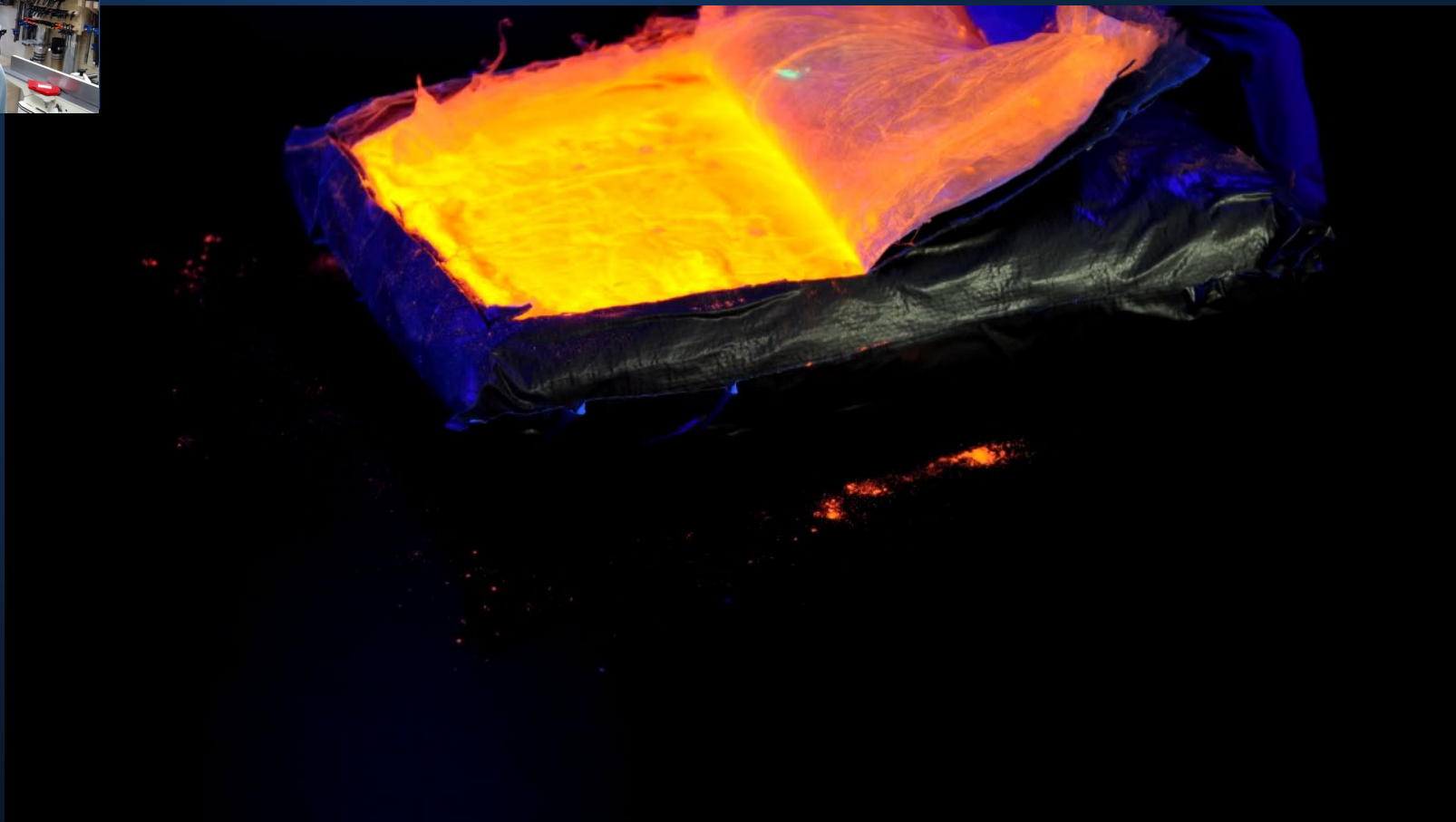
## Laser-sheet visualization



Lasers and optics help illuminate microparticles during net-weight operations. Provides 2D slice of the transport of particles during these activities.



# Fluorescent powder visualization





# Take-aways from fluorescent power experiments



- Net weights were quickly identified as one of the most concerning practices
  - Emptying the entire contents of the drug evidence to obtain the weight of the material (powder) without the packaging
  - Required for prosecution based on weight
- Repackaging of evidence also of concern





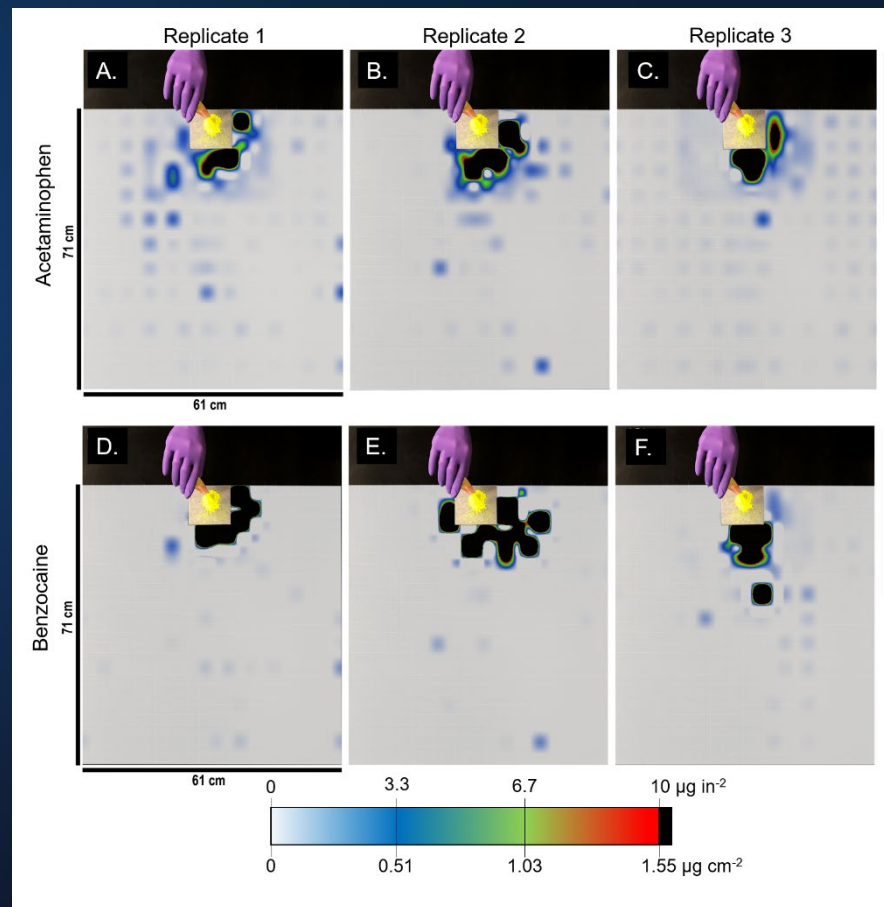
# Laser-sheet visualization ~2 g powder



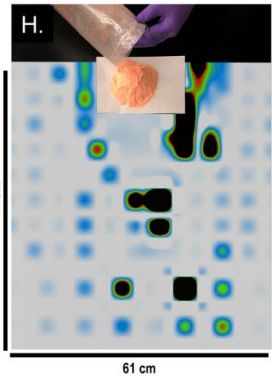
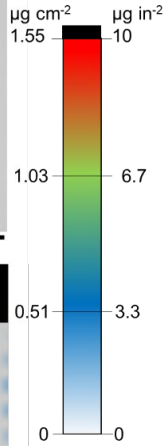
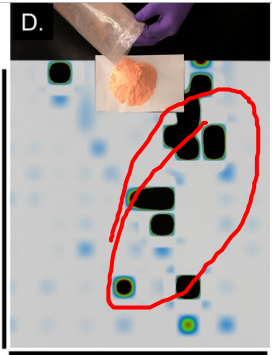
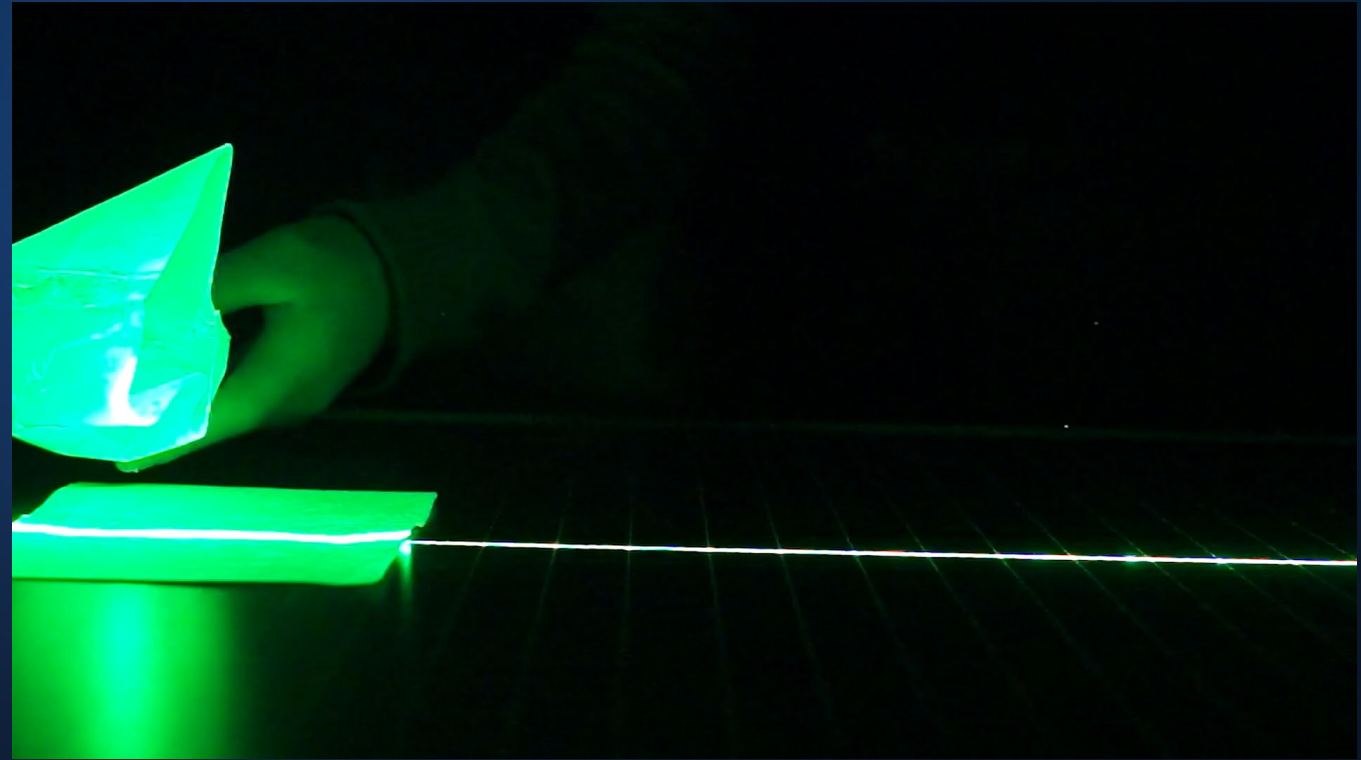


# Measuring the Distribution

- Wet swabbing was completed in a grid-pattern to collect residue that settled onto the bench after several minutes
- As expected, the highest background was observed in area immediately surrounding the weigh paper
- Surface concentrations in excess of  $10 \mu\text{g}/\text{in}^2$  observed
- Airflow was not controlled in these experiments



# Laser-sheet visualization ~100 g powder





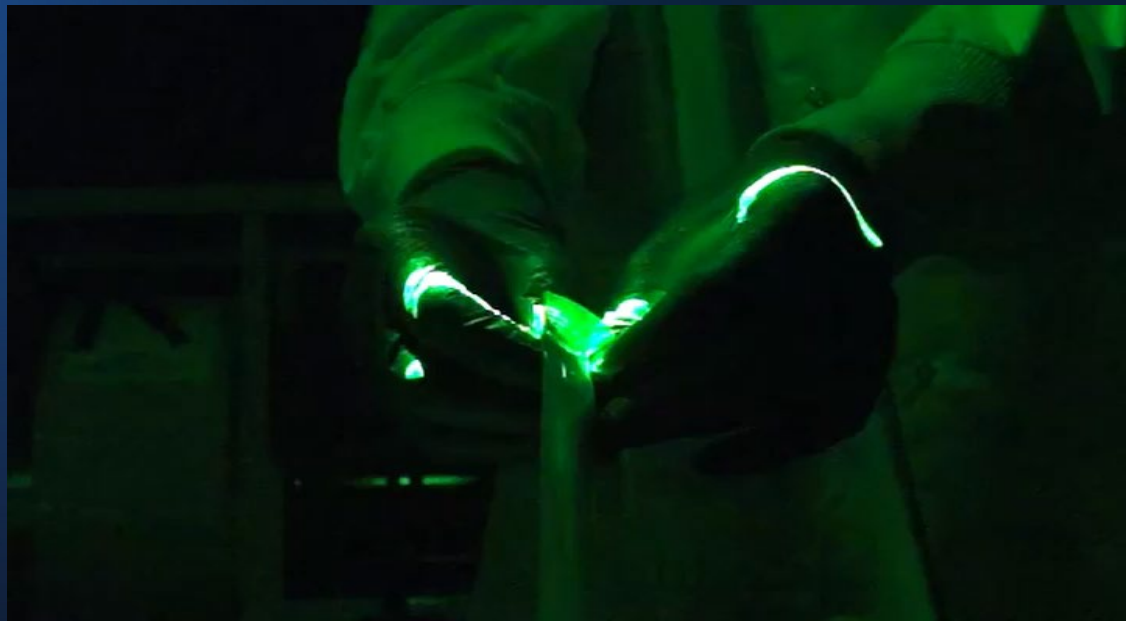


# New contamination visualization laboratory

New facility that improves visualization and imaging techniques

Current efforts are focused on:

- Particulate transport in the third dimension?
- Expanding studies to other workplace processes
- Visualize process modifications that minimize exposure risks





- Our goal is to increase the safety of drug chemists due to the increasing presence of extremely toxic substances
- We are developing imaging tools and techniques that help visualize the processes that increase exposure risk, and evaluate the efficacy of process modifications
- Collaborations with other agencies have aided in interpretation of analyst risk and development of best practices
- While the current focus is on seized drugs these processes and approaches could easily be translated to other areas



[matthew.staymates@nist.gov](mailto:matthew.staymates@nist.gov)

Thanks for listening!

Questions or Comments?

Many thanks to Amber Burns (Maryland State Police) and Ed Sisco (NIST)!



A snapshot of drug background levels



A multi-laboratory investigation of drug background levels



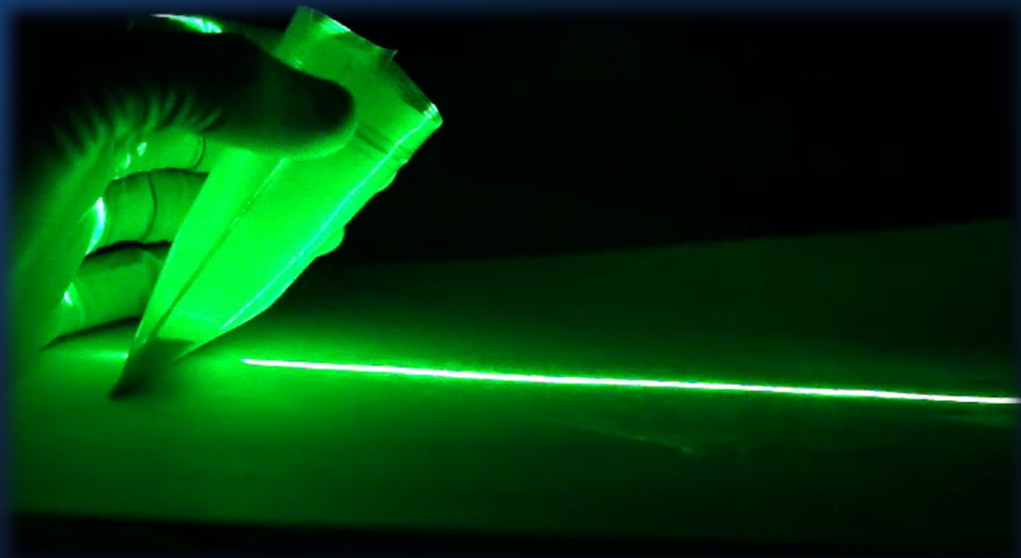
Visualizing particle spread



Net weights: Visualizing and quantifying



Cleaning agents removing drugs



# Development of Novel Workflows for Seized Drug Analysis

Edward Sisco - NIST

Amber Burns – MSP-FSD



Certain commercial products are identified in order to adequately specify the procedure; this does not imply endorsement or recommendation by NIST, nor does it imply that such products are necessarily the best available for the purpose.

Certain commercial products are identified in order to adequately specify the procedure; this does not imply endorsement or recommendation by Maryland State Police, nor does it imply that such products are necessarily the best available for the purpose.

A portion of this work was supported by Award No. 2018-DU-BX-0165, awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.

# Novel Workflows

Sample Handling and Preparation



Sample Analysis



Data Analysis & Interpretation



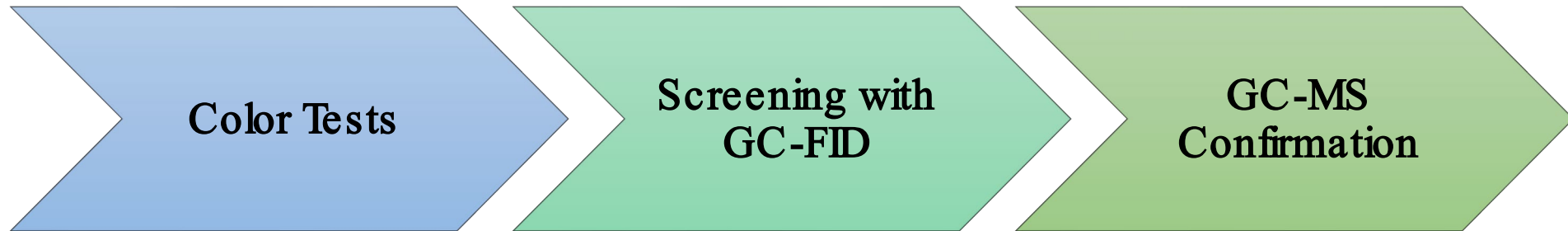
Screening Approaches – Expanding DART-MS Capabilities

Confirmatory Analyses – Targeted GC-MS Methods

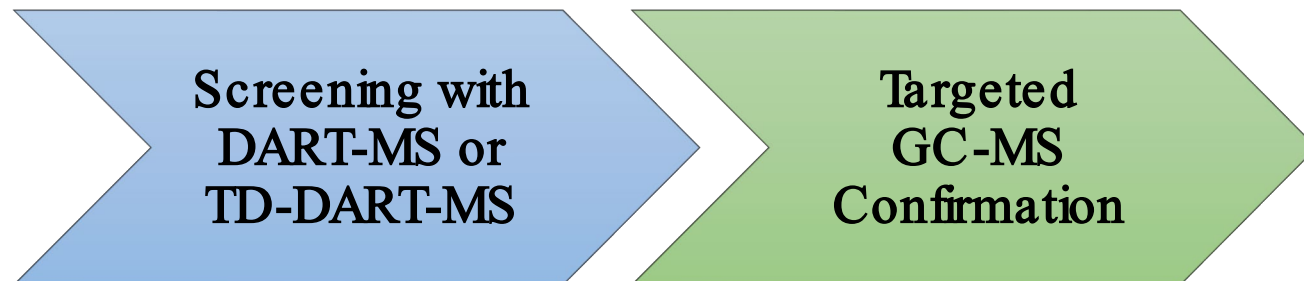
# Workflow Shift

A large part of the development and implementation of this work has been done in collaboration with Maryland State Police, Forensic Sciences Division

## Current Approach



## New Approach



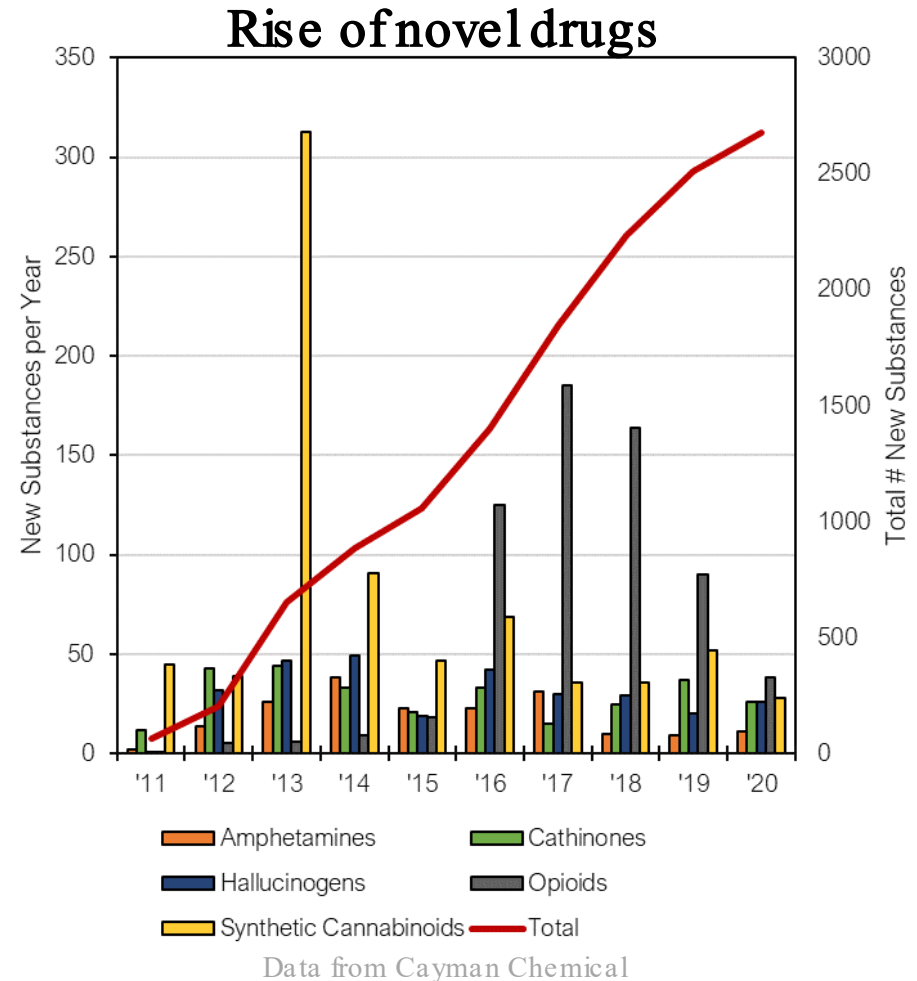
# Expanding DART-MS Capabilities



# DART-MS in Forensics

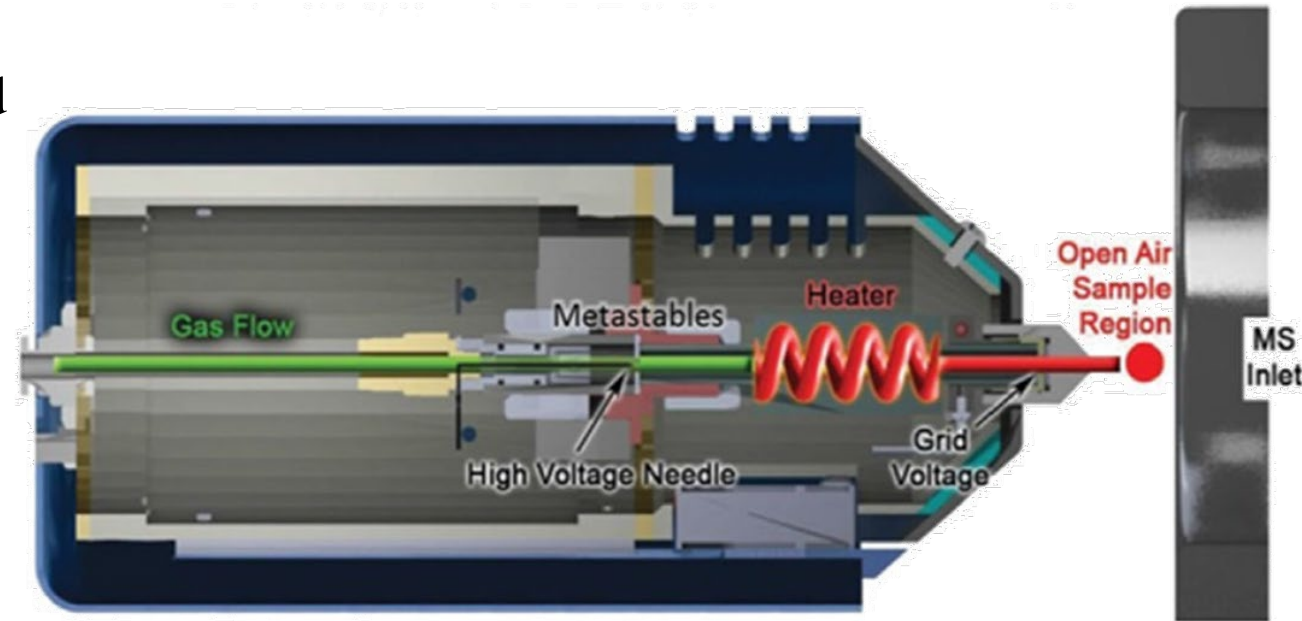
With the growing presence of novel drugs and increased complexity in cases, some labs are searching for technologies to aid in rapid screening

- DART-MS has been demonstrated as a powerful tool for this purpose
- Provides presumptive information in seconds with no sample preparation
- More specific than other presumptive tests
- Significant research effort at NIST surrounding DART-MS and its applications in the field



# What is DART-MS?

- One of many ambient ionization mass spectrometry sources
- Conventional DART-MS uses a heated helium metastable gas stream for sample desorption and ionization
- Allows for analysis of samples with minimal preparation or pre-treatment
- Analysis time 1 s to 5 s
- Typical LODs ppm to ppb
- Can be coupled to a range of mass spectrometers

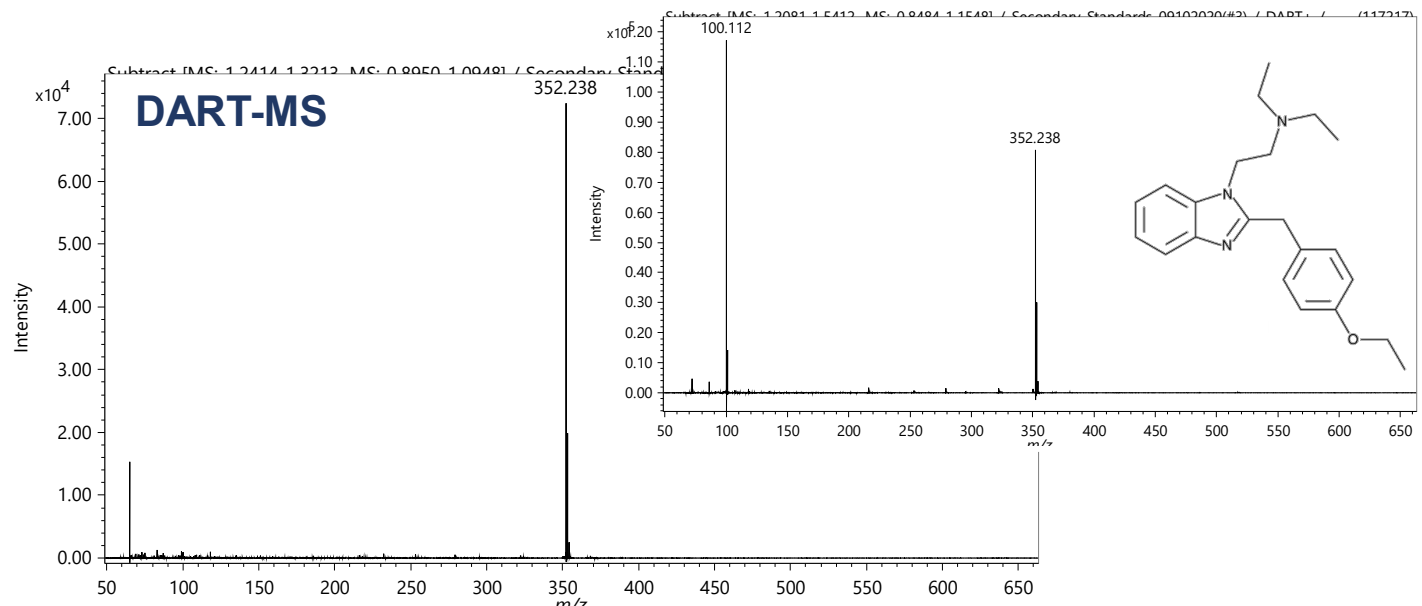
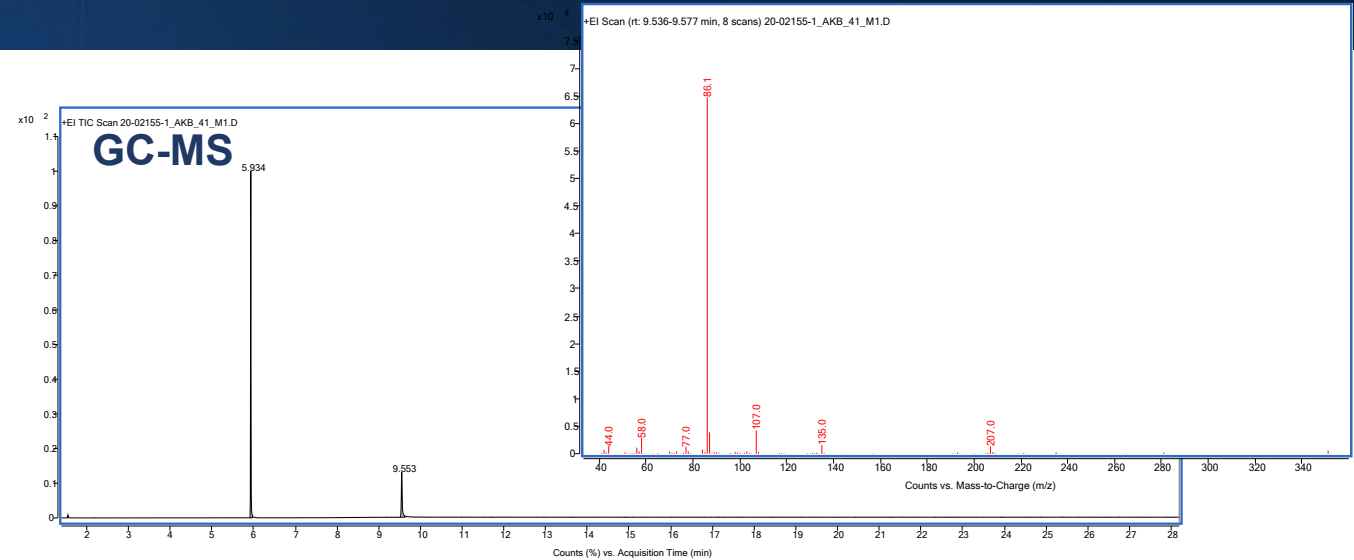


[www.ionsense.com](http://www.ionsense.com)

**DART-MS** – Direct Analysis in Real Time Mass Spectrometry

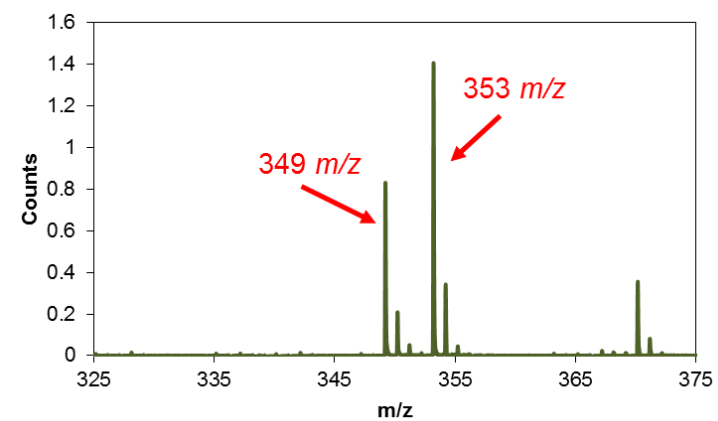
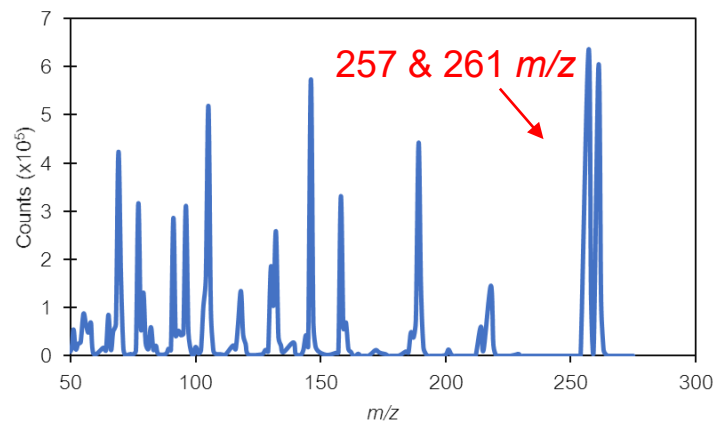
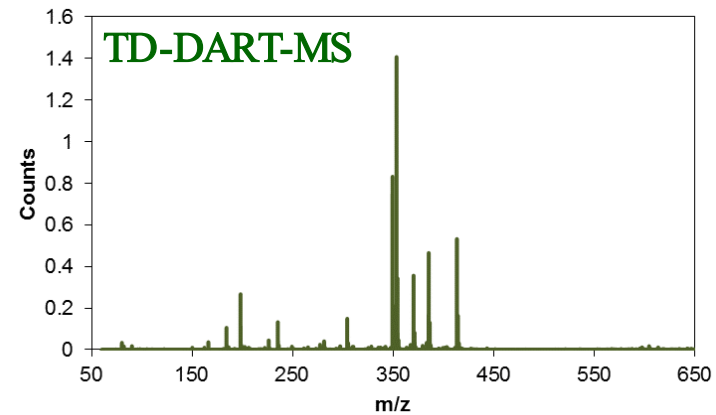
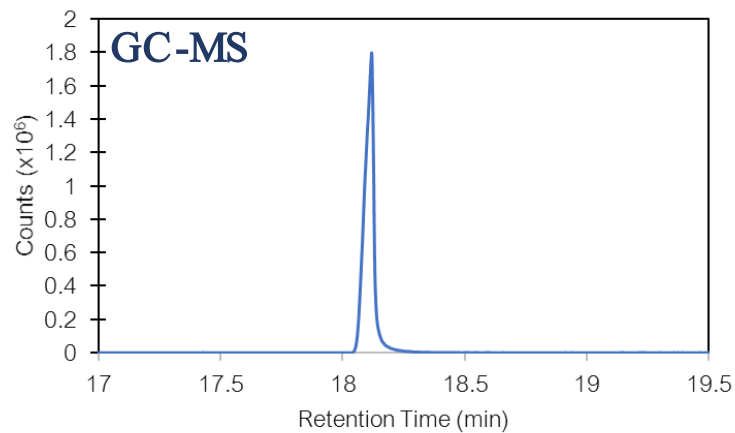
# DART-MS Use Cases

- We have been working with labs to identify unique use cases for DART-MS
- Utilizing GC-MS & DART-MS data can help identify unknowns
- Allows for determination of fragmentation and molecular ion of the compound
- Used to identify multiple unknown fentanyls and other NPSs



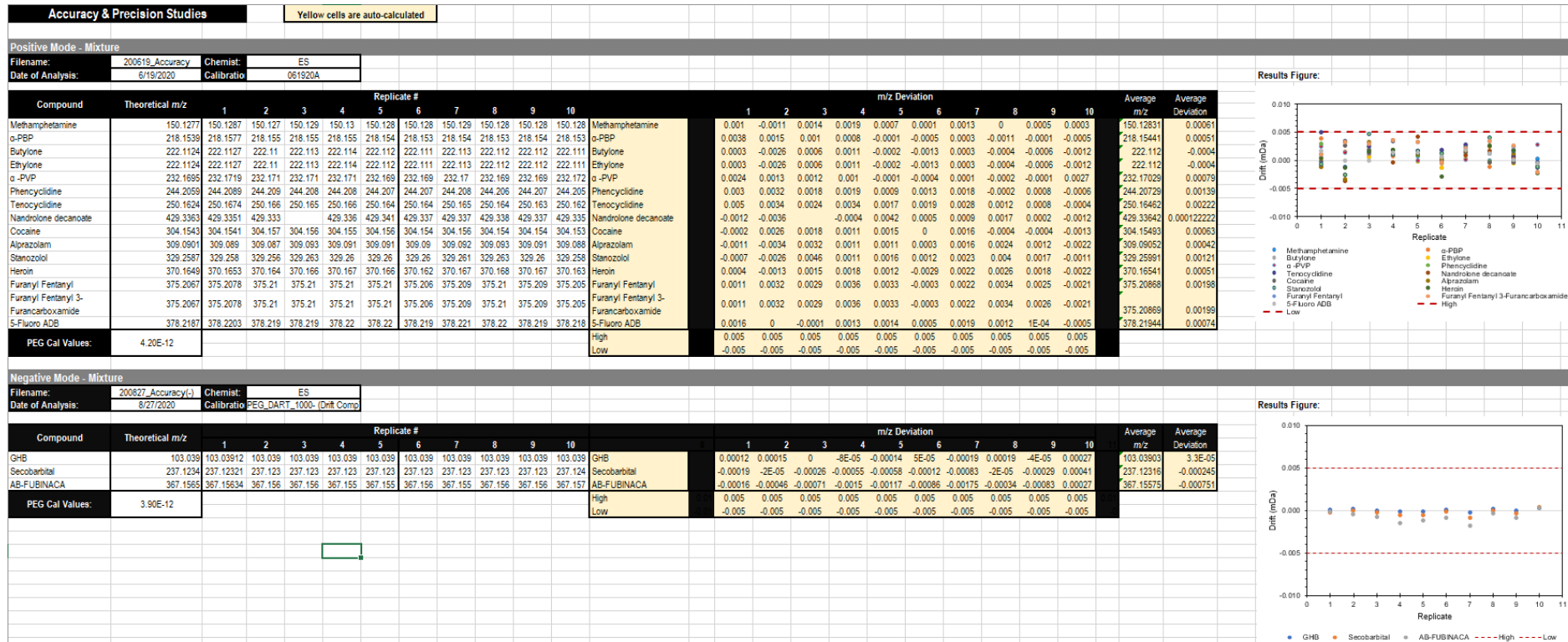
# DART-MS Use Cases

Utilize DART-MS to identify compounds that were completely not resolvable in the GC chromatograph



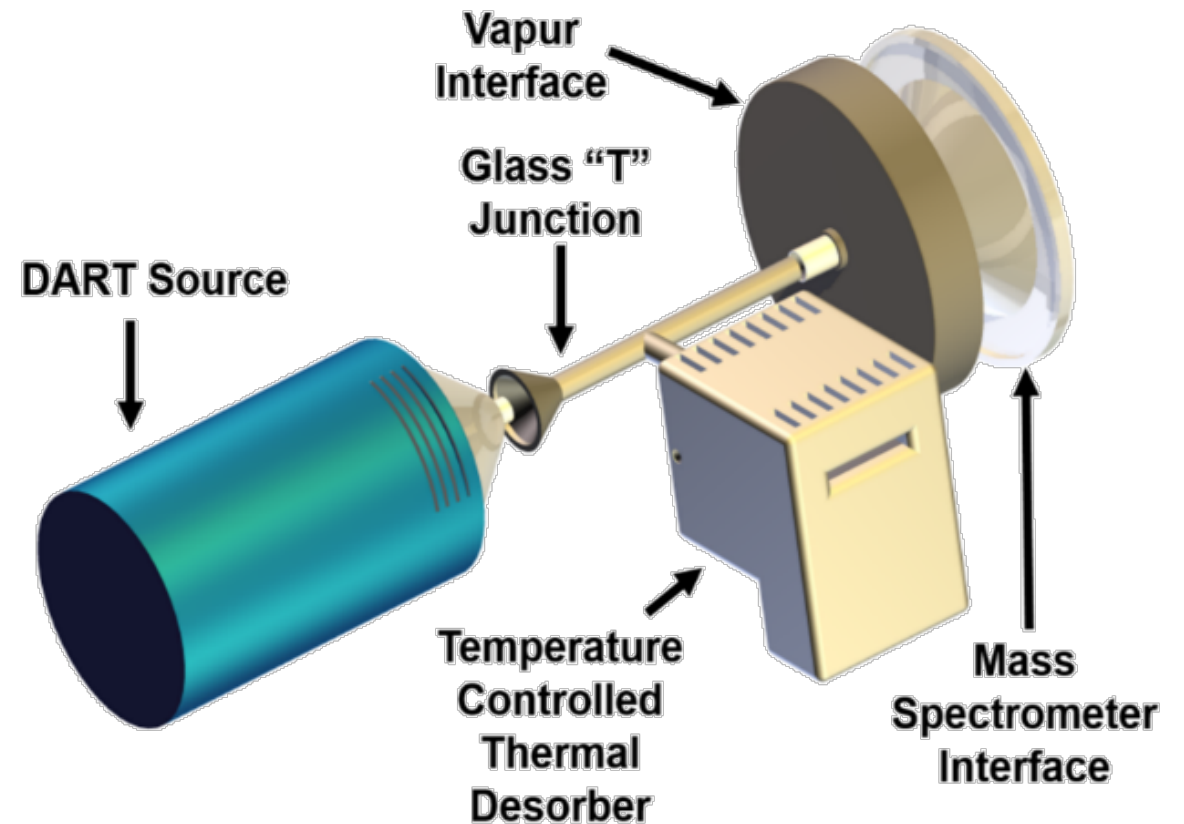
# Validation Package Development

- Ongoing efforts to develop a DART-MS Validation package
- Includes validation plan, data workup document, SOPs, maintenance manuals, search lists, and training questions
- Available to labs who are interested



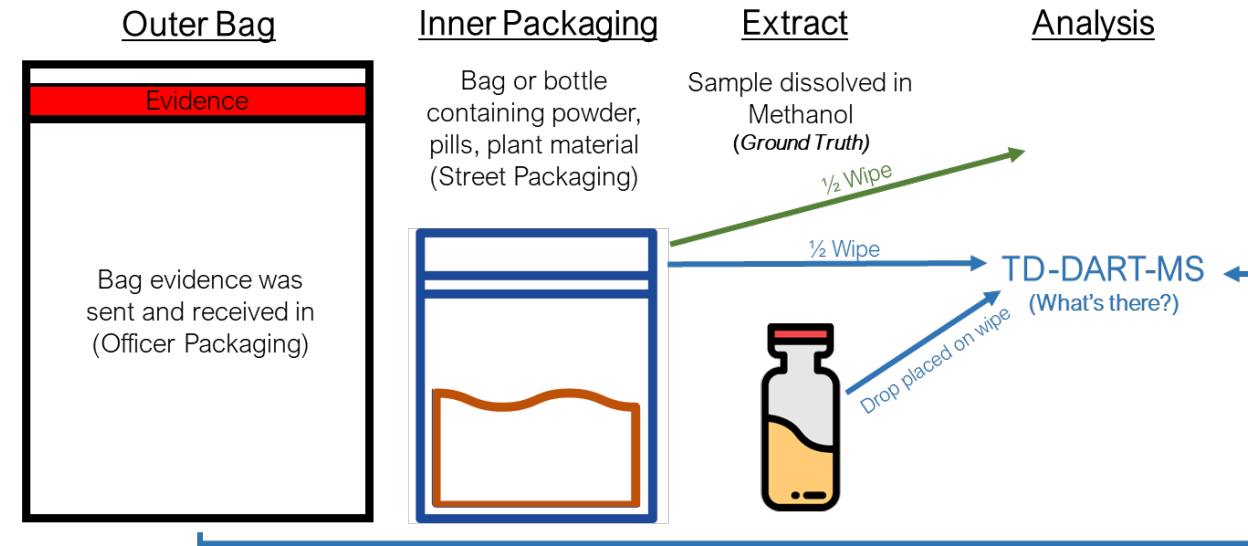
# Non-Traditional TD-DART-MS

- Many recent research projects have used a TD-DART-MS configuration
- Glass T-junction mounted coupled with Vapor interface
  - Used to pull analyte towards mass spectrometer
- Thermal desorber attached to T-junction
  - Allows for wipe-based sample insertion
- Entire set-up can be removed and switched to traditional DART-MS in under 1 minute
- Increase sensitivity, reproducibility, safety
- Use nitrogen as the source gas



# Evidence Screening Study

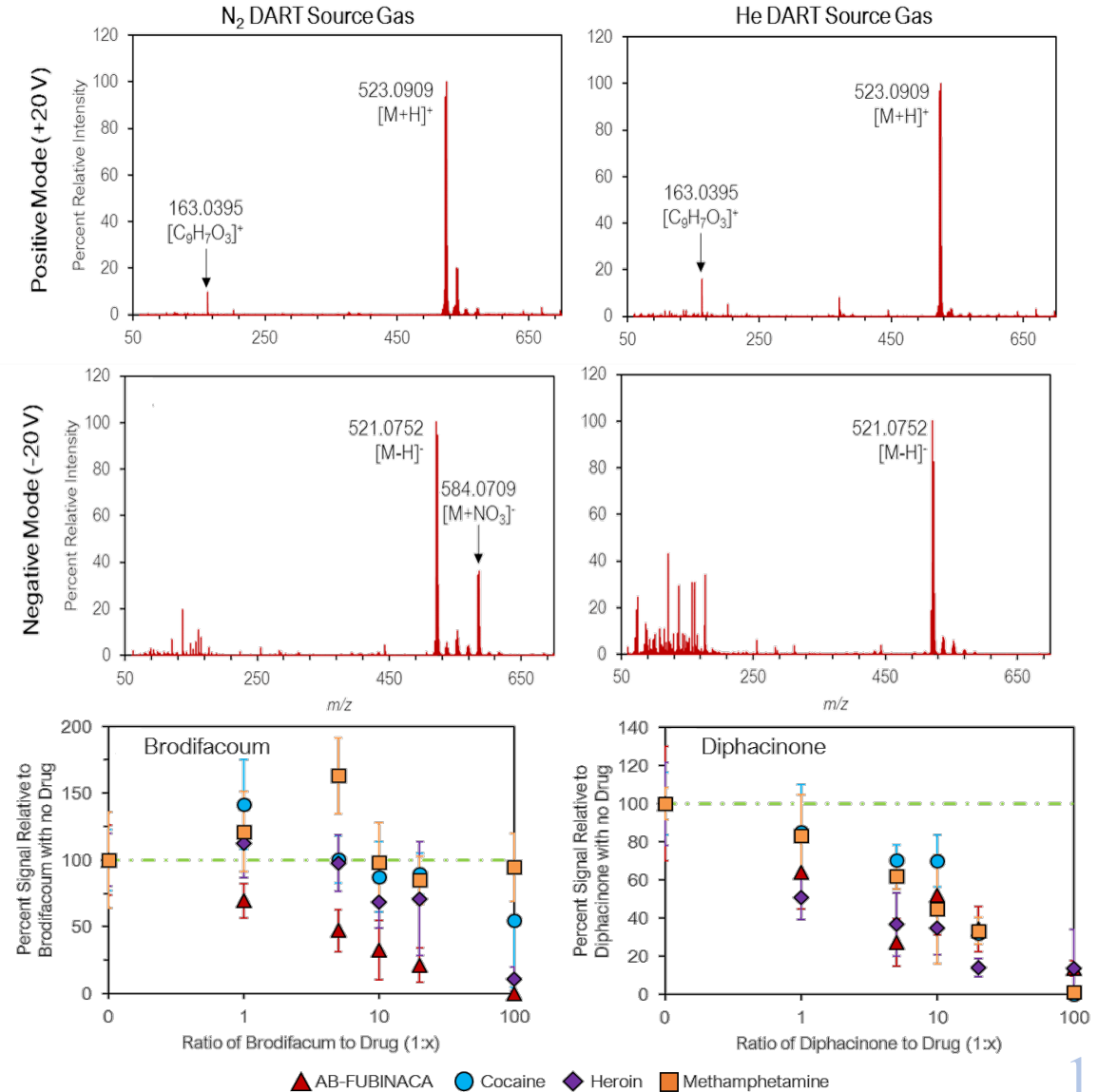
- To date >200 items sampled
- Inner packaging found to be the most representative (92 % accuracy)
- *100 % so far in determining the presence of synthetic opioids*
- Typically enough material to saturate the MS or IMS
- False identifications attributed to plant material in foil bags or cases with large amounts of cocaine



| Inner Packaging          | Extract                 | Percent Occurrence | Result Type    |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Drug Detected            | Same Drug Detected      | 79 % (n = 151)     | True Positive  |
| Drug Detected            | No Drug Detected        | 1.5 % (n = 3)      | False Positive |
| Drug Detected            | Different Drug Detected | 2.5 % (n = 5)      | False Positive |
| No Drug Detected         | Drug Detected           | 4 % (n = 7)        | False Negative |
| No Drug Detected         | No Drug Detected        | 13 % (n = 25)      | True Negative  |
| <b>Overall Accuracy:</b> | <b>92 %</b>             |                    |                |

# Recent Application: Rodenticides in Drugs

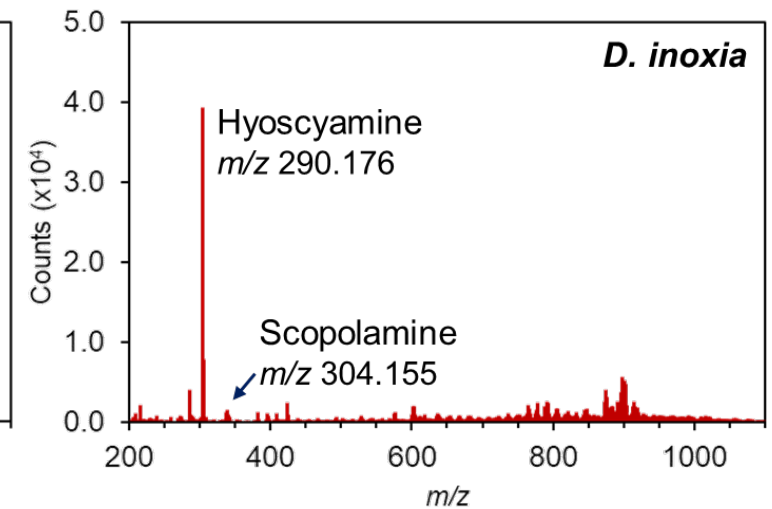
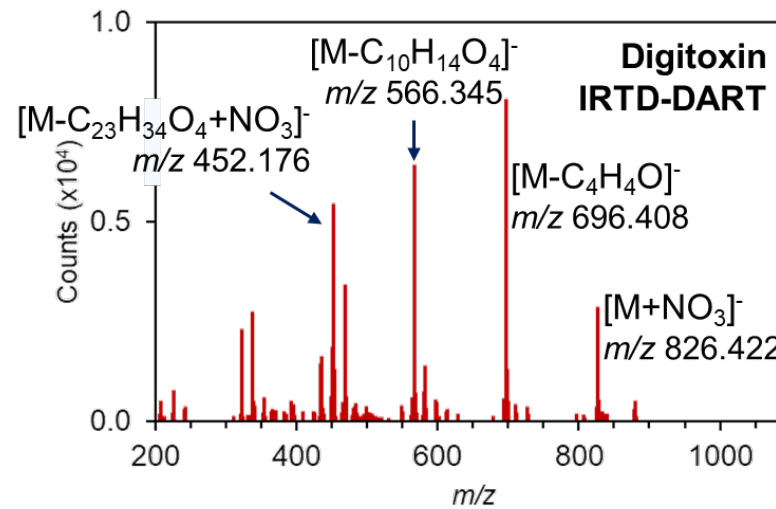
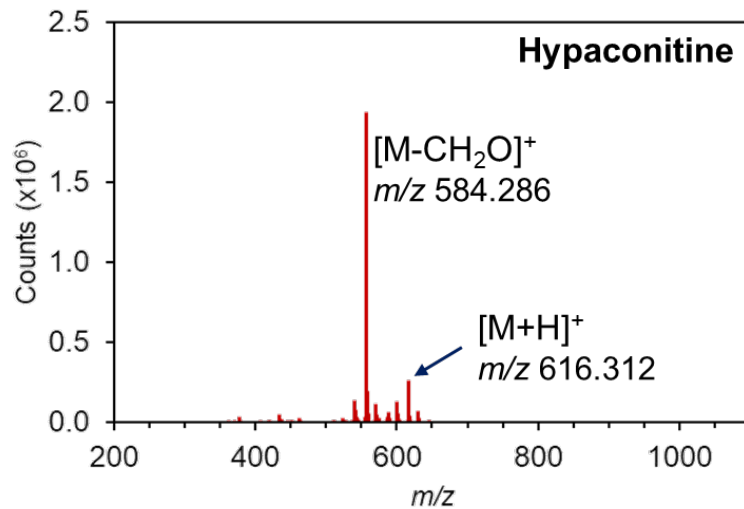
- Investigated if DART-MS could detect rodenticides (anti-coagulants) in illicit drug mixtures
- Six common compounds were easily detected by TD-DART-MS
  - Form both positive and negative ions
  - LODs in the 10's ng range
- In binary mixtures, competitive ionization with less volatile drugs was observed
  - Analysis in negative ionization mode eliminates competitive ionization concerns





# Recent Application: Seed-based Toxins

- Investigated the detection of seed-based toxins such as scopolamine, oleandrin, hyoscyamine, and digitoxin
- Several toxins (oleandrin, digoxin, digitoxin) performed better in negative ionization mode
- Compared different platforms (DART, TD-DART, IRTD-DART) to identify the most useful approach for this application



# Targeted GC-MS Methods

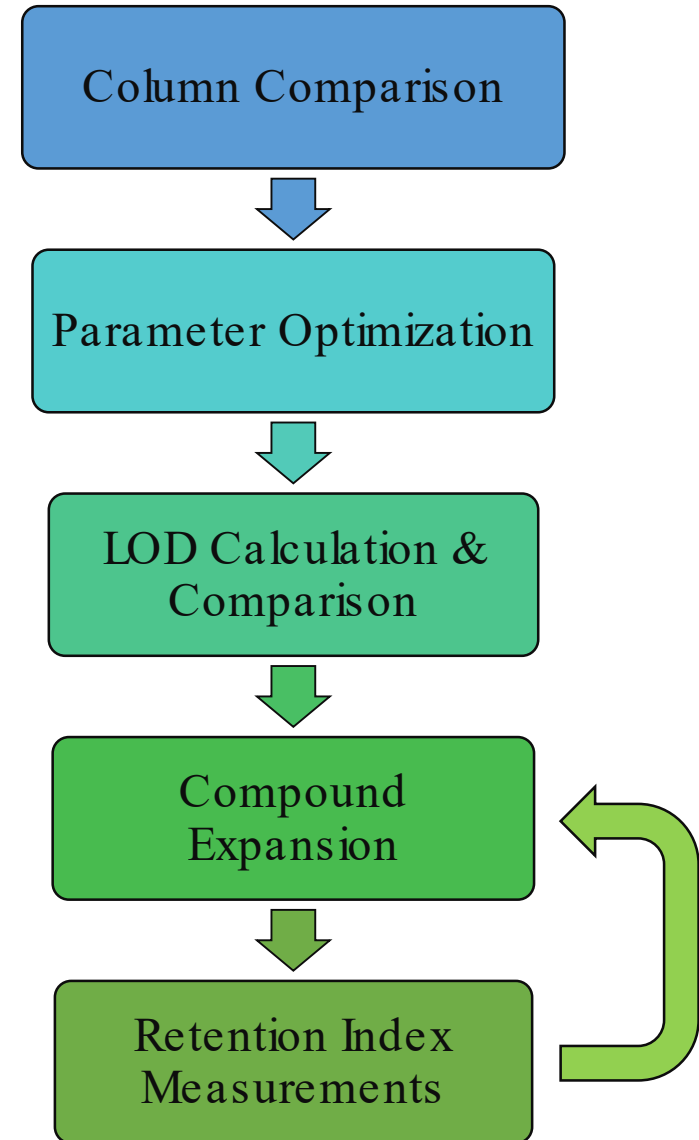
# Targeted GC-MS Methods

Working with MSP-FSD to develop targeted GC-MS methods for different compound classes.

The goal is to develop methods that:

- 1) Enhance separation of isomers
- 2) Increase sensitivity
- 3) If possible, shorten runtimes
- 4) Standardize reporting / methods across labs

Methods also build in retention time locking and retention indices to improve rigor



- Worked with Cayman Chemical to develop custom test mixtures for each class
- Span range of elution times within class
- Include isomers to be able to measure resolution

| Opioids                | Cathinones        | Cannabinoids  |
|------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| m-FIBF                 | Phentermine       | FUB-AMB       |
| p-FIBF                 | Methamphetamine   | MDMB-FUBINACA |
| Cyclopropyl Fentanyl   | Dimethylone       | EMB-FUBINACA  |
| Crotonyl Fentanyl      | Butylone          | MMB2201       |
| Carfentanil            | Ethylone          | ADB-FUBINACA  |
| Methoxyacetyl Fentanyl | Dibutylone        | AB-FUBINACA   |
| Furanyl Fentanyl       | Pentylone         | 5F-ADBICA     |
| Etizolam               | Dimethylpentylone | 5F-ABICA      |
| Noscapine              | Ethylpentylone    |               |
| Benzodioxole Fentanyl  |                   |               |

# Column Comparison

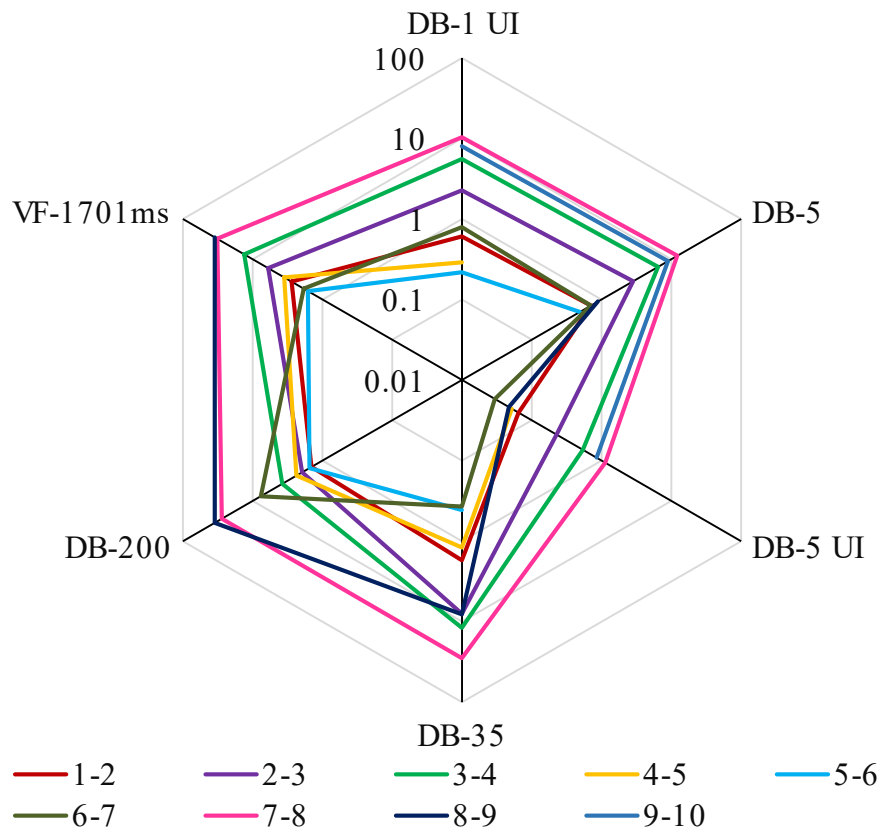
- First portion of study looked to identify the effect of different columns on test mixture response
- Evaluated six different columns
  - DB1UI, DB5, DB5UI, DB35, DB200, and VF1701ms
- Utilized a uniform method across all columns to keep other parameters fixed

## Uniform method

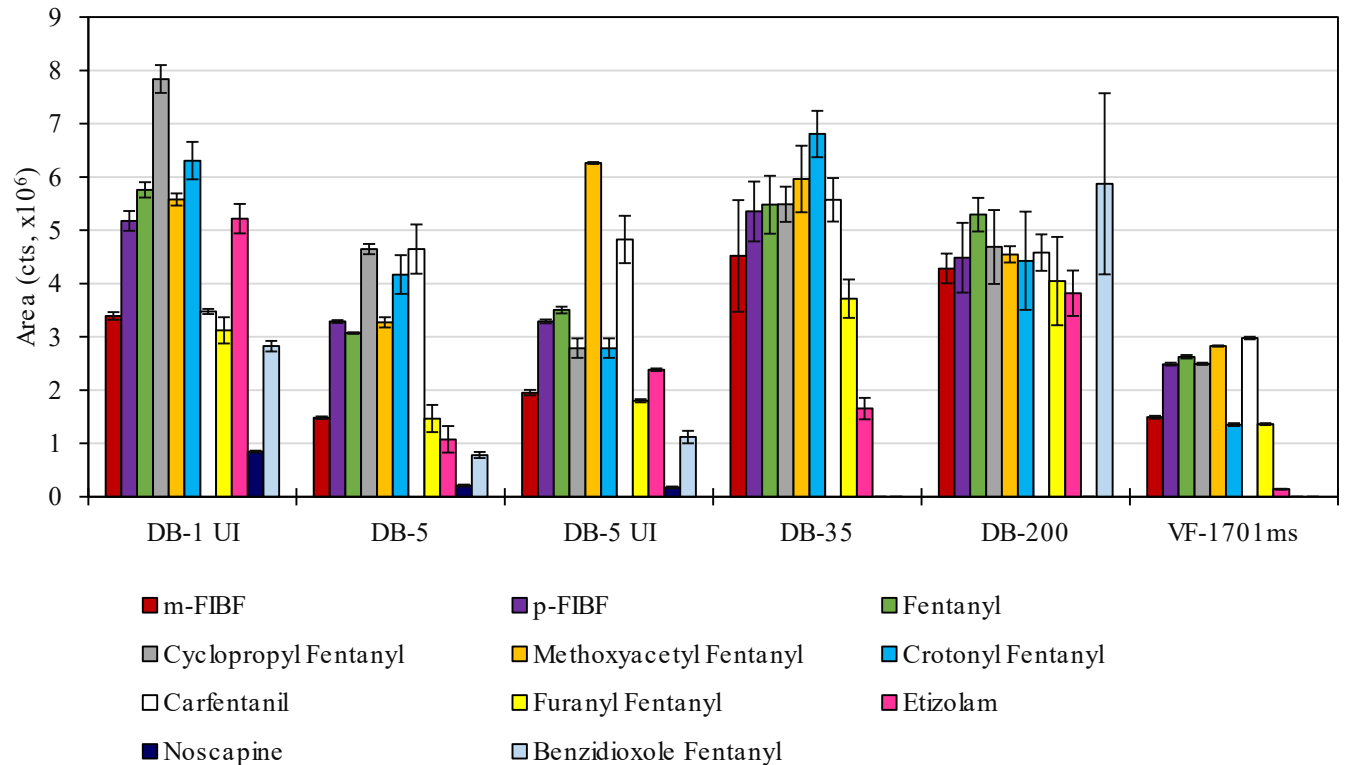
|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Temperature Program | 1) 100 °C for 0 min<br>2) Ramp at 30 °C/min to 300 °C<br>3) Hold for 24 min |
| Flow Rate           | 1.8 mL/min (Constant Flow)  |
| Injection Volume    | 1 µL  |
| Inlet Temperature   | 275 °C  |
| Split Ratio         | 30:1  |
| Transfer Line       | 300 °C  |
| Quad Temperature    | 150 °C  |
| Source Temperature  | 230 °C  |
| Tune Mode           | stune   |
| Solvent Delay       | 1.30 min  |
| Mass Scan Range     | m/z 40 – m/z 550  |
| Threshold           | 150   |
| Scan Speed          | N = 2   |
| Total Run Time      | 30.667 min  |

# Column Comparison

$\Delta$  Retention Time (%)

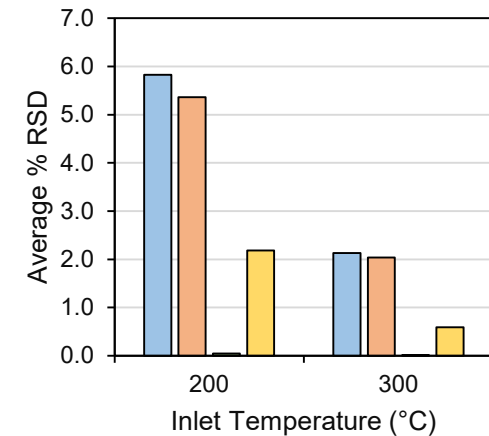
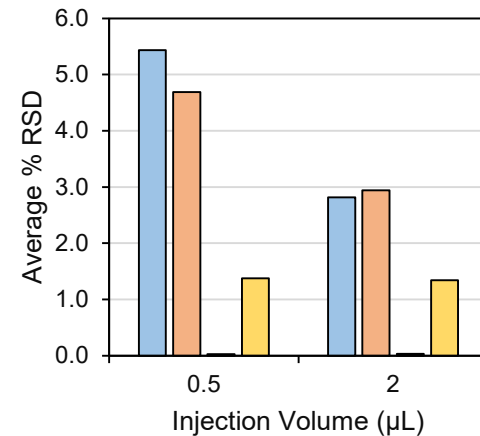
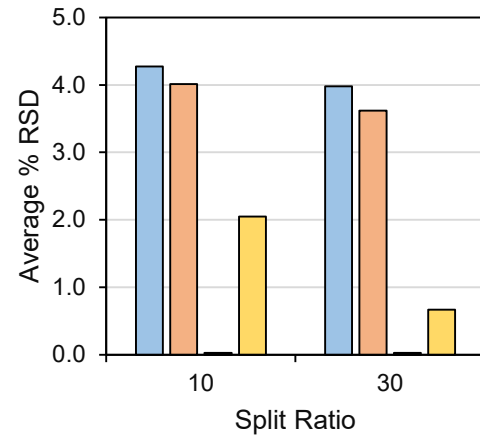
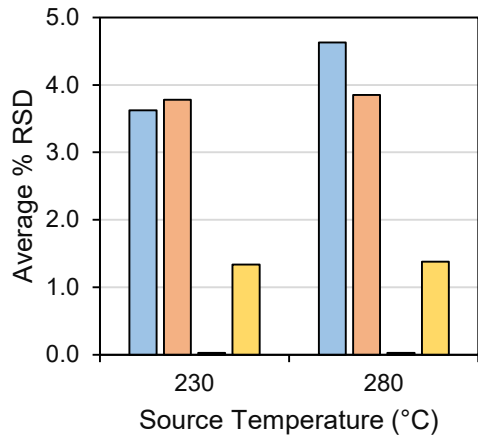
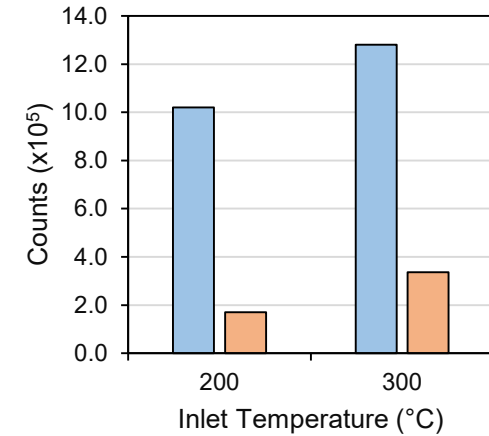
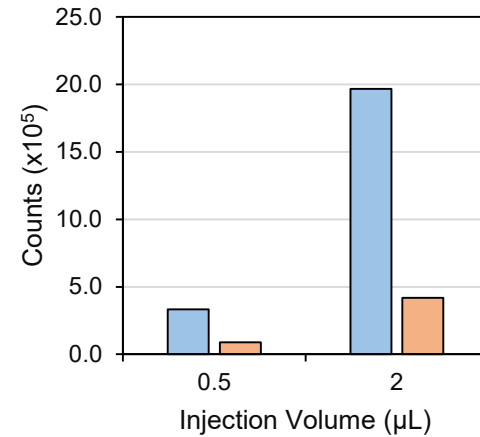
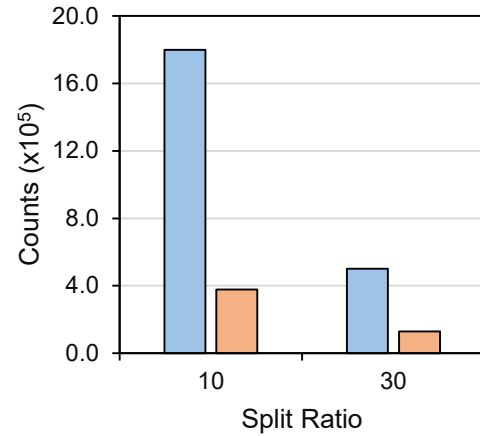
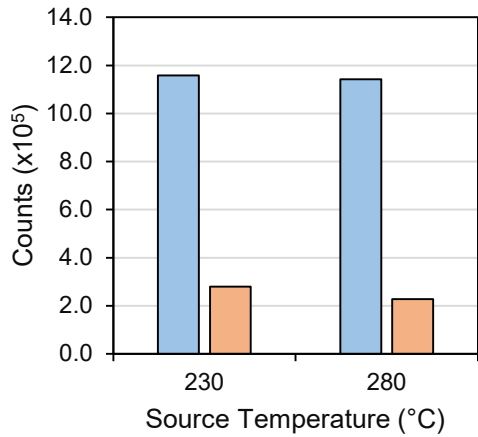


Peak Area



Once a column was chosen, studies were completed to optimize temperature and flow programs.

# Other Settings – Design of Experiments



Peak Area

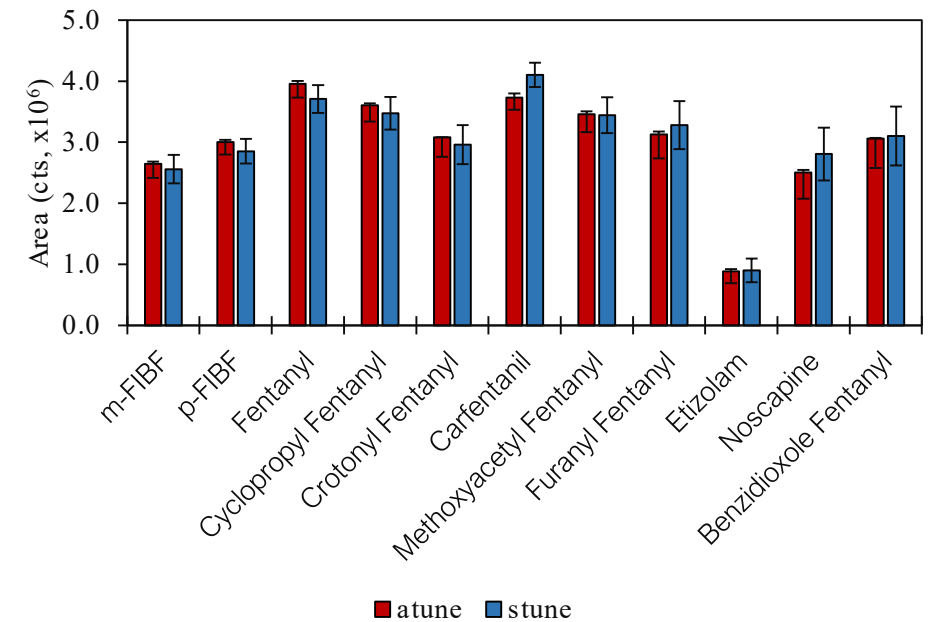
Peak Height

Retention Time

$\Delta$  Retention Time (%)

# Final Optimization

- Results of relevant parameters from the DOE were further refined
- Final optimization looked at tune type
- After optimization, ran expanded panel of drugs to ensure method parameters worked



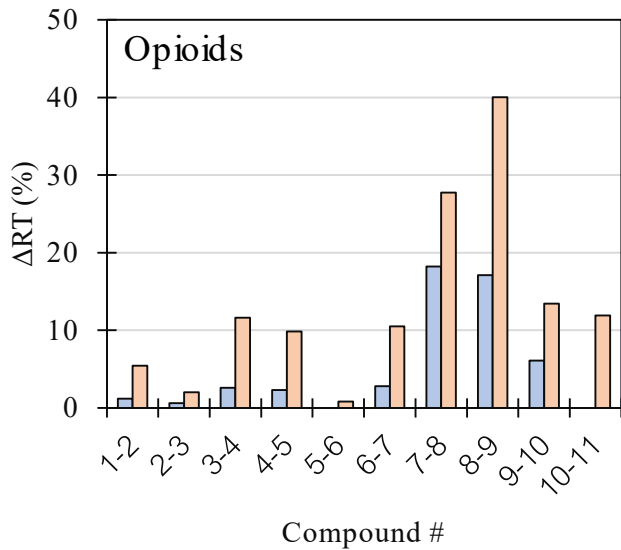


# Approximate LODs

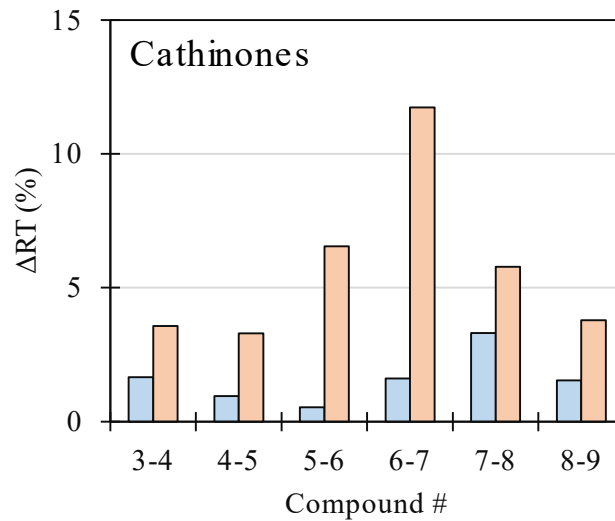
| Opioids             | LOD (µg/mL) | Cathinones        | LOD (µg/mL) | Cannabinoids  | LOD (µg/mL) |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| m-FIBF              | 1           | Phentermine       | 0.5         | FUB-AMB       | 1           |
| p-FIBF              | 1           | Methamphetamine   | 0.5         | MDMB-FUBINACA | 1           |
| Fentanyl            | 1           | Dimethylone       | 0.5         | EMB-FUBINACA  | 5           |
| Cyclopropyl Fent.   | 1           | Butylone          | 0.5         | MMB2201       | 1           |
| Carfentanil         | 10          | Ethylone          | 0.5         | ADB-FUBINACA  | 10          |
| Crotonyl Fentanyl   | 10          | Dibutylone        | 0.5         | AB-FUBINACA   | 10          |
| Methoxyacetyl Fent. | 10          | Pentylone         | 0.5         | 5F-ADBICA     | 10          |
| Furanyl Fentanyl    | 1           | Dimethylpentylone | 0.5         | 5F-ABICA      | 10          |
| Etizolam            | 25          | Ethylpentylone    | 0.5         |               |             |
| Noscapine           | 25          |                   |             |               |             |
| Benzodioxole Fent.  | 10          |                   |             |               |             |

# Comparison to Current Method

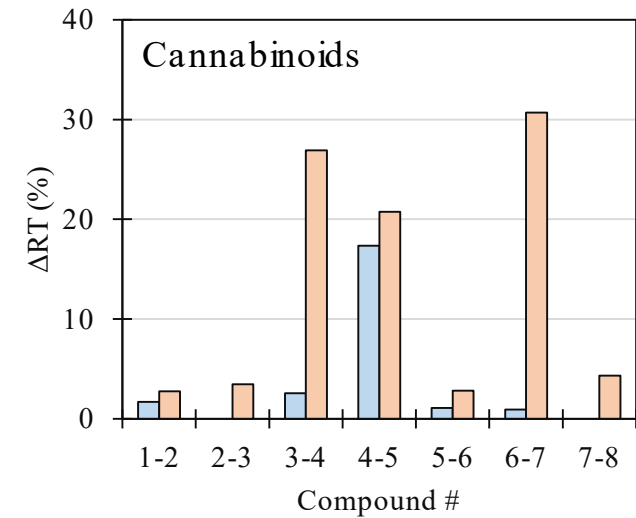
| % Change (Average) | Area   | Height | Delta RT | % RSD (RT) |
|--------------------|--------|--------|----------|------------|
| Opioids            | 327 %  | 37 %   | 135 %    | 93 %       |
| Cathinones         | 66 %   | -19 %  | 262 %    | 0 %        |
| Cannabinoids       | 6518 % | 4045 % | 220 %    | 537 %      |



■ Current ■ Target

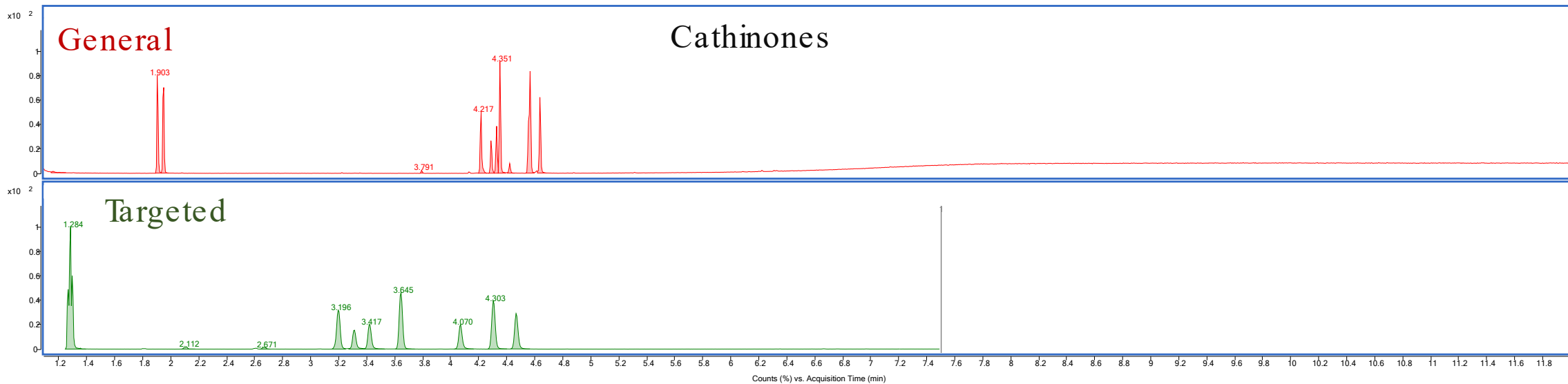
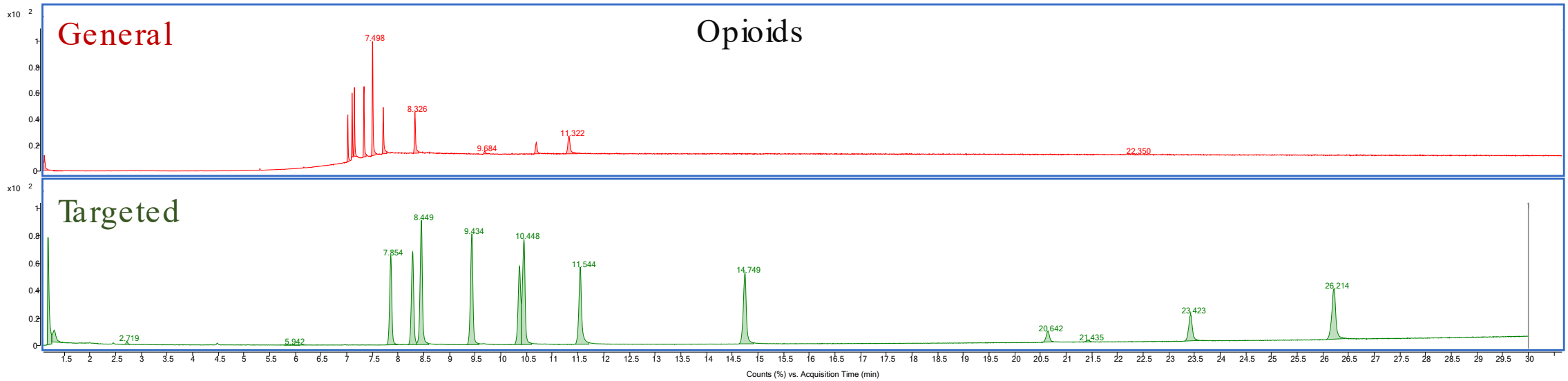


■ Current ■ Target



■ Current ■ Target

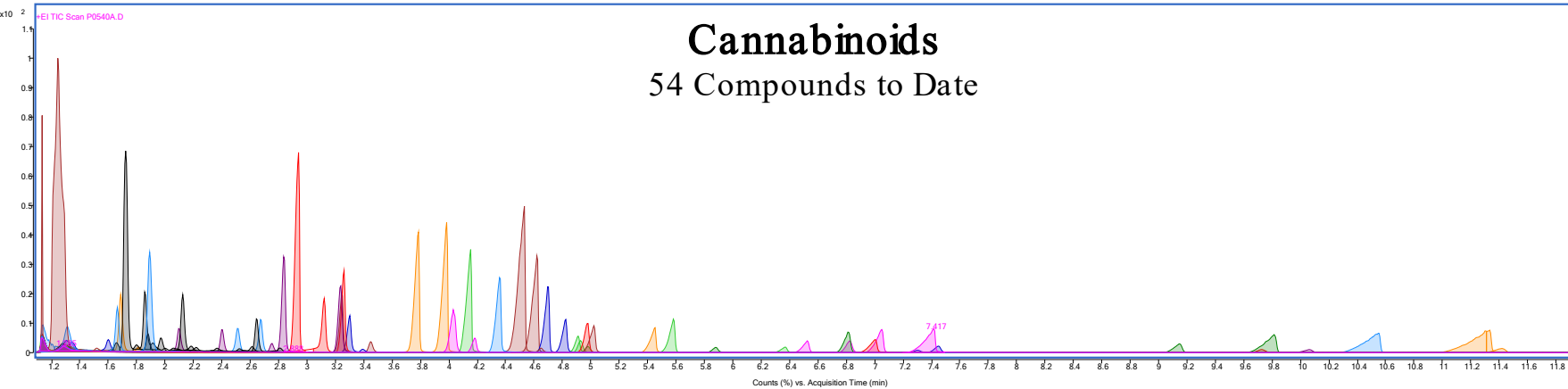
# Comparison to Current Methods



# Compound Expansion

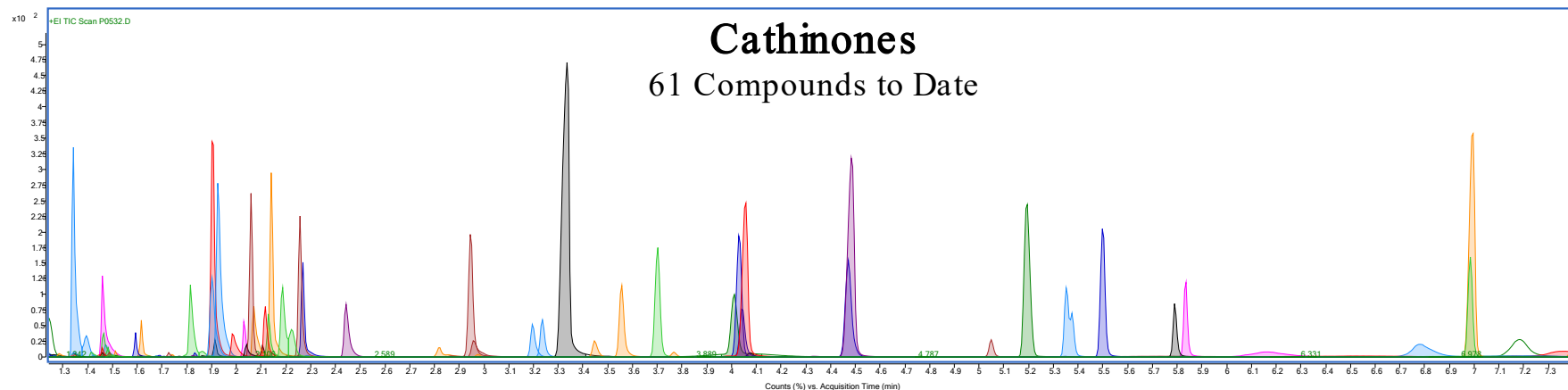
## Cannabinoids

54 Compounds to Date

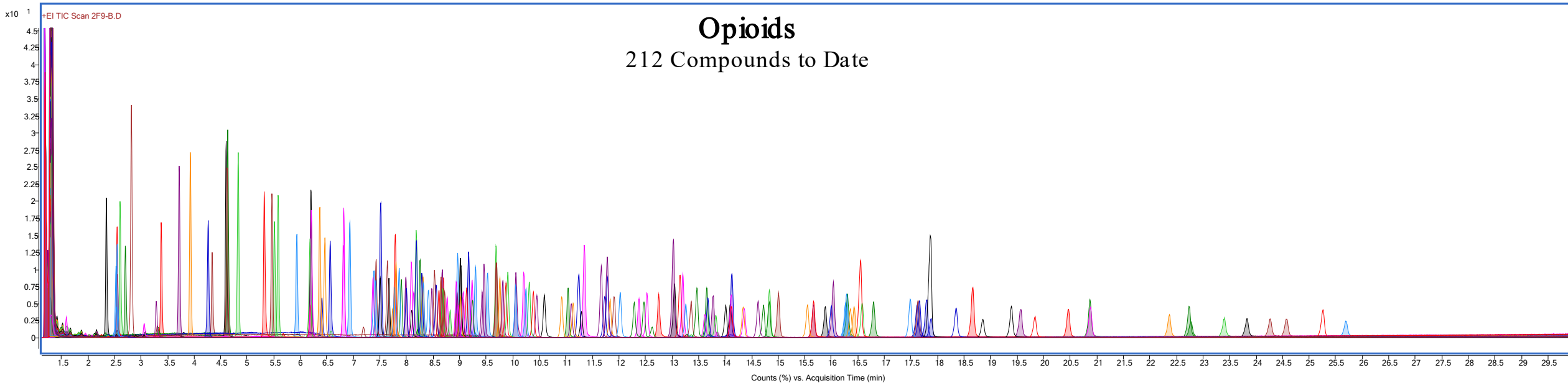


## Cathinones

61 Compounds to Date



- Once developed, additional compounds were analyzed
  - Made adjustments to methods as needed
- Replicate analyses to evaluate locked RT and RI
  - Build library with RT and RI information
- All compounds had >1% RT difference or differentiable MS



- Utilized Fentanyl Analog Screening kit for expansion of opioid method
- Method has 8 pairs of compounds that have similar MS with <1 % RT difference
  - Six sets were ortho / meta isomer pairs
- Currently building out automated data analysis and reporting features

The next step of this work is looking to quantify a comparison between the current workflow and a novel workflow.

- Take a subset of cases and have drug chemists analyze using one of the workflows
- Evaluate the level of detail gained at each step
- Quantify the time taken for each step
- Identify strengths and weaknesses in the novel workflow



# Thank you.

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[DARTdata@nist.gov](mailto:DARTdata@nist.gov)



**National Institute of  
Standards and Technology**  
U.S. Department of Commerce



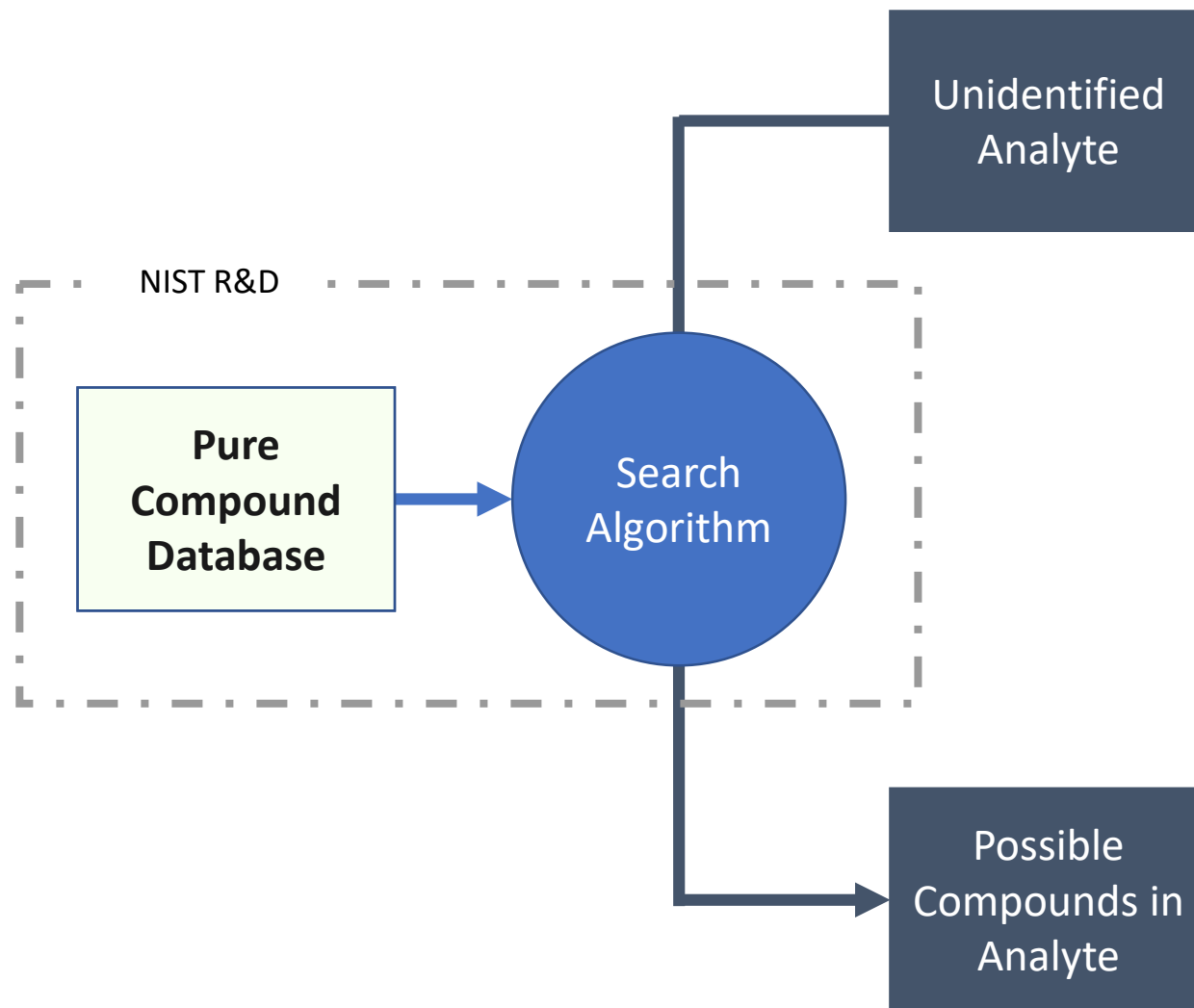
# NIST Mass Spectral Libraries and Search Tools for Seized Drug Analysis

**Arun S. Moorthy**

National Institute of Standards and Technology  
Gaithersburg, MD, USA 20899

November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020.





## NIST20 EI MS Library



## NIST20 Tandem MS Library



## MS Software



### Why Upgrade to NIST20

- 350,704 spectra (44,082 new)
- 306,643 compounds (39,729 new)

### Library Growth Concentrated in

- Human & plant metabolites
- Legal & illicit drugs
- General analytical interest

### Gas Chromatography Retention Index and Methods Library

- 447,289 RI values
- 139,382 compounds

### Comprehensive

- 30,999 compounds (17,191 new)
- 185,602 precursor ions (67,520 new)
- 1,320,464 spectra (745,638 new)
- Instruments Used: Ion Trap, Collision Cell

### Wide Coverage

- Metabolites
- Pharmaceuticals
- Industrial Surfactants
- Glycans-Lipids-Sugars
- Pesticides
- Amino Acids, Di- & Tryptic Tri-Peptides

- Every new spectrum reviewed by two analysts.
- New compounds chosen for wide analytical interest.
- MS Search v. 2.4 with hybrid search
- AMDIS (GC-MS)
- MS Interpreter Major Revision

**Email** [massspec@nist.gov](mailto:massspec@nist.gov)

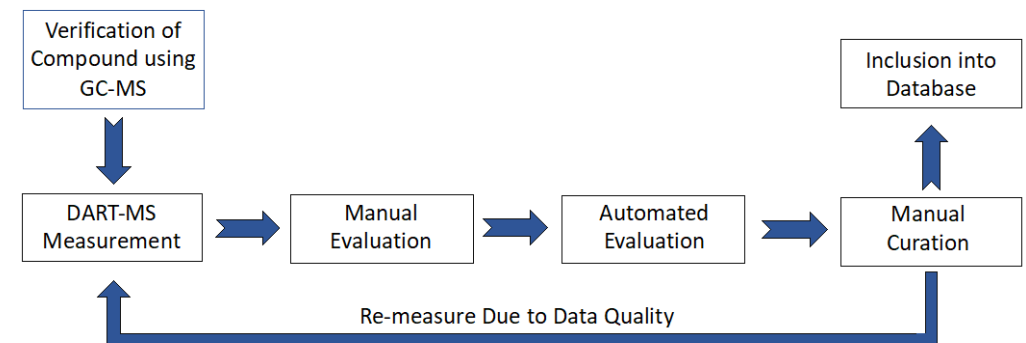
**Web** [chemdata.nist.gov](http://chemdata.nist.gov)

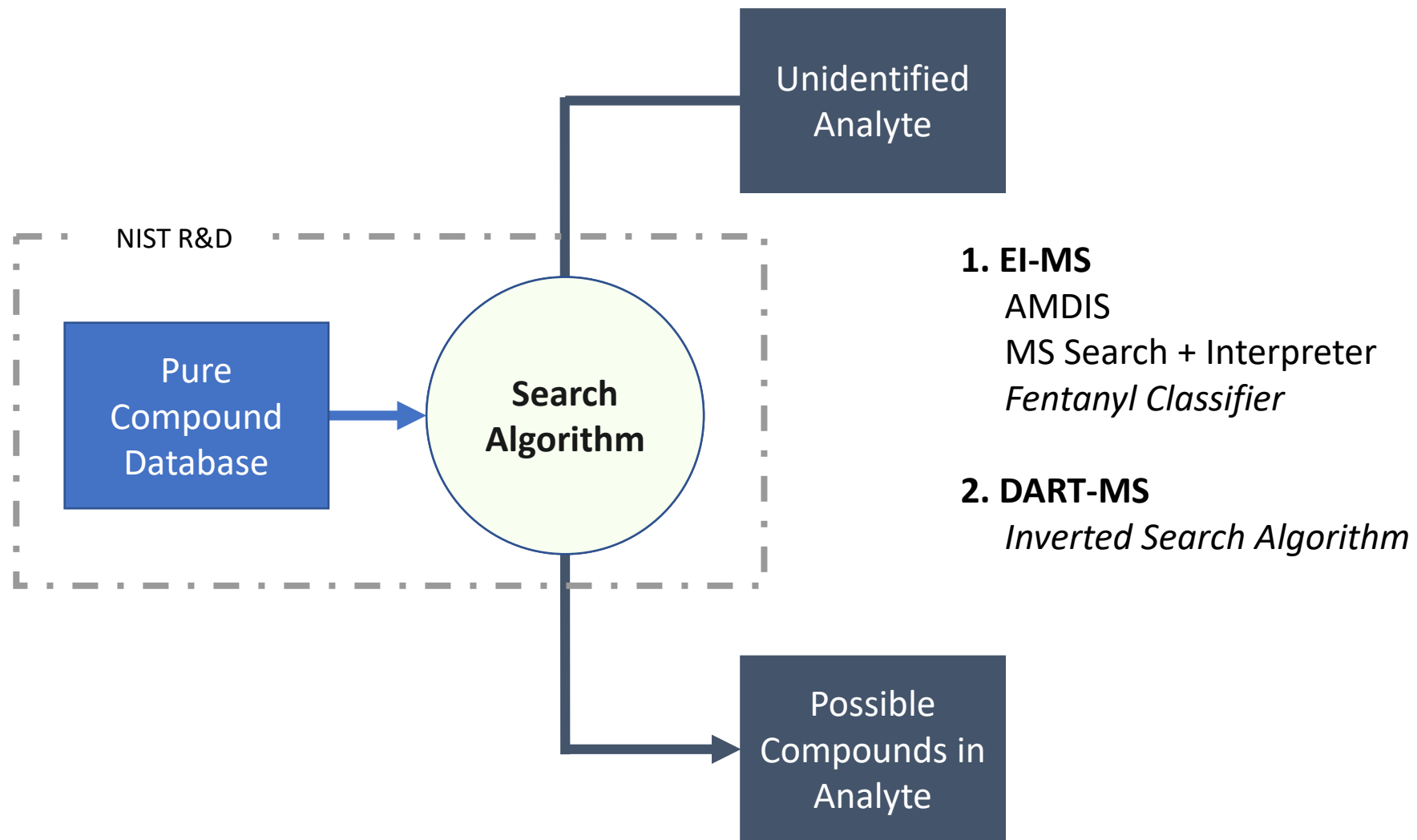


# DART-MS Forensics Database

- A new database **available now**
  - focus on NPS's, synthetic opioids, cutting agents
  - spectra measured at multiple orifice energies
- Developed new manual and **automated** evaluation workflow
- Implemented workflow to facilitate rapid updating of database
  - open-source software
- Database and workflow available from [DARTdata@nist.gov](mailto:DARTdata@nist.gov)

NEW DART-MS  
Forensic  
database:  
663 compounds,  
1989 spectra

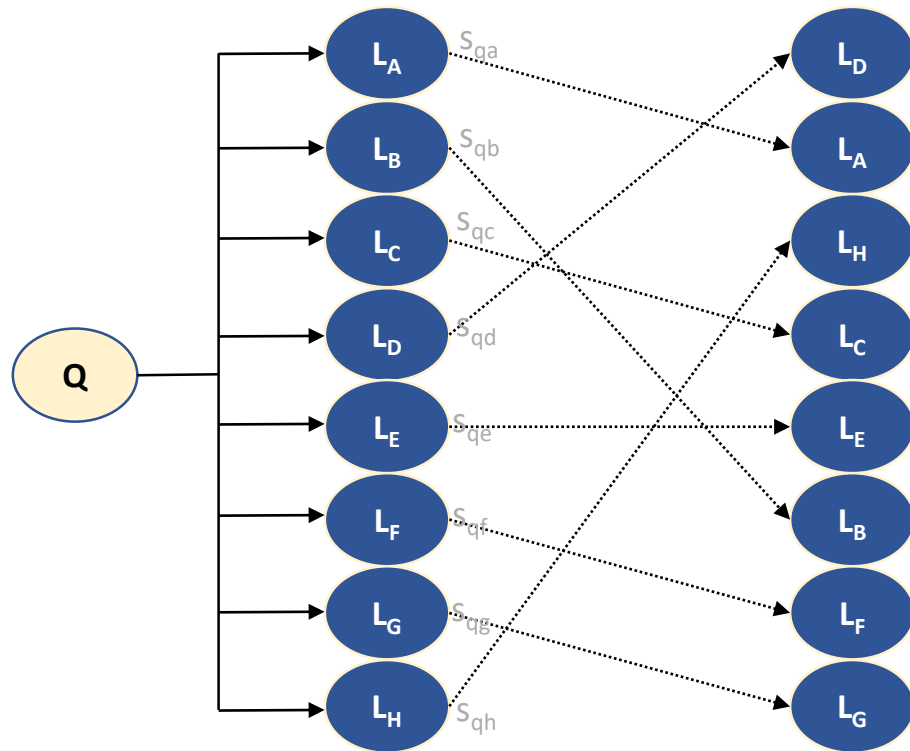




# EI-MS: Fentanyl Classifier

## Mass spectral library searching

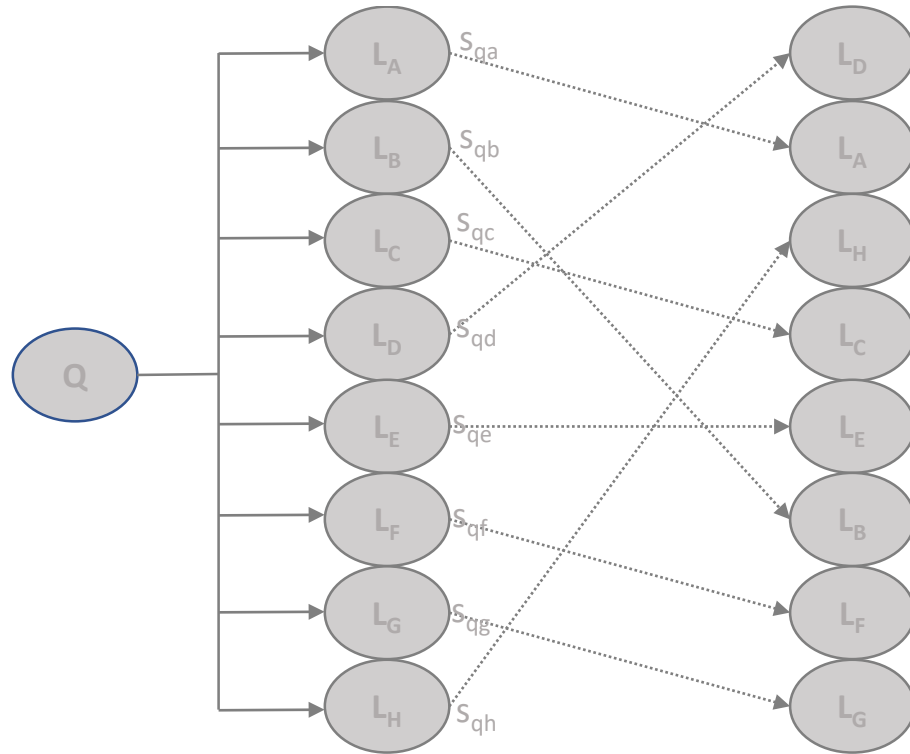
(1) Measure Similarity (2) Rank by Similarity



# EI-MS: Fentanyl Classifier

## Mass spectral library searching

(1) Measure Similarity (2) Rank by Similarity



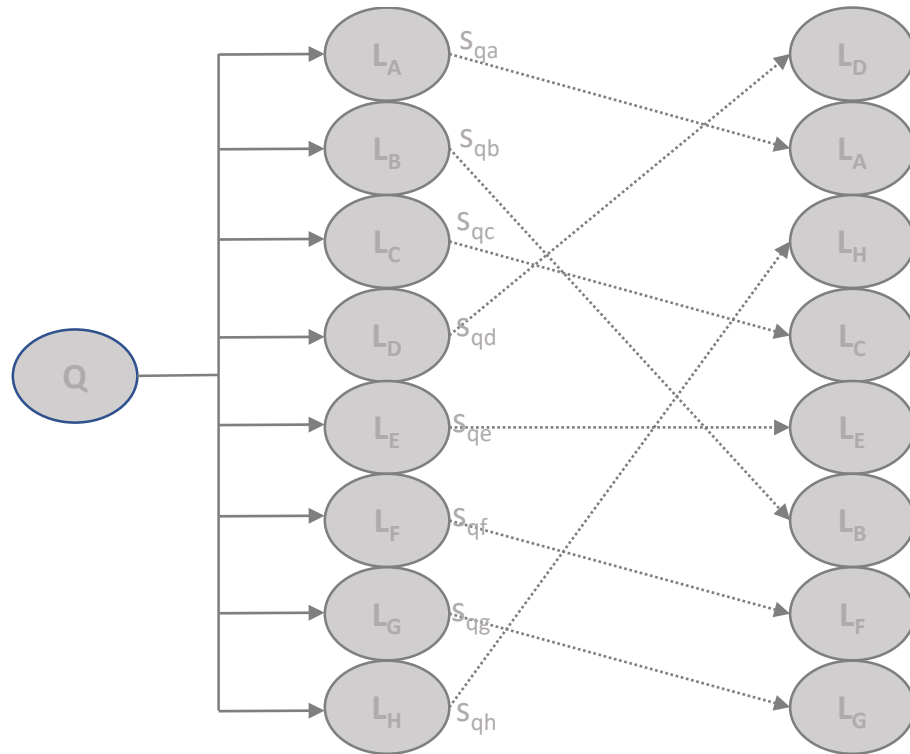
## Mass spectral similarity mapping

|                | Q        | L <sub>A</sub> | L <sub>B</sub> | L <sub>C</sub> | L <sub>D</sub> | L <sub>E</sub> | L <sub>F</sub> | L <sub>G</sub> |
|----------------|----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Q              | 1        | $S_{aq}$       | $S_{bq}$       | $S_{cq}$       | $S_{dq}$       | $S_{eq}$       | $S_{fq}$       | $S_{gq}$       |
| L <sub>A</sub> | $S_{qa}$ | 1              | $S_{ba}$       | $S_{ca}$       | $S_{da}$       | $S_{ea}$       | $S_{fa}$       | $S_{ga}$       |
| L <sub>B</sub> | $S_{qb}$ | $S_{ab}$       | 1              | $S_{cb}$       | $S_{db}$       | $S_{eb}$       | $S_{fb}$       | $S_{gb}$       |
| L <sub>C</sub> | $S_{qc}$ | $S_{ac}$       | $S_{bc}$       | 1              | $S_{dc}$       | $S_{ec}$       | $S_{fc}$       | $S_{gc}$       |
| L <sub>D</sub> | $S_{qd}$ | $S_{ad}$       | $S_{bd}$       | $S_{cd}$       | 1              | $S_{ed}$       | $S_{fd}$       | $S_{gd}$       |
| L <sub>E</sub> | $S_{qe}$ | $S_{ae}$       | $S_{be}$       | $S_{ce}$       | $S_{de}$       | 1              | $S_{fe}$       | $S_{ge}$       |
| L <sub>F</sub> | $S_{qf}$ | $S_{af}$       | $S_{bf}$       | $S_{cf}$       | $S_{df}$       | $S_{ef}$       | 1              | $S_{gf}$       |
| L <sub>G</sub> | $S_{qg}$ | $S_{ag}$       | $S_{bg}$       | $S_{cg}$       | $S_{dg}$       | $S_{eg}$       | $S_{fg}$       | 1              |

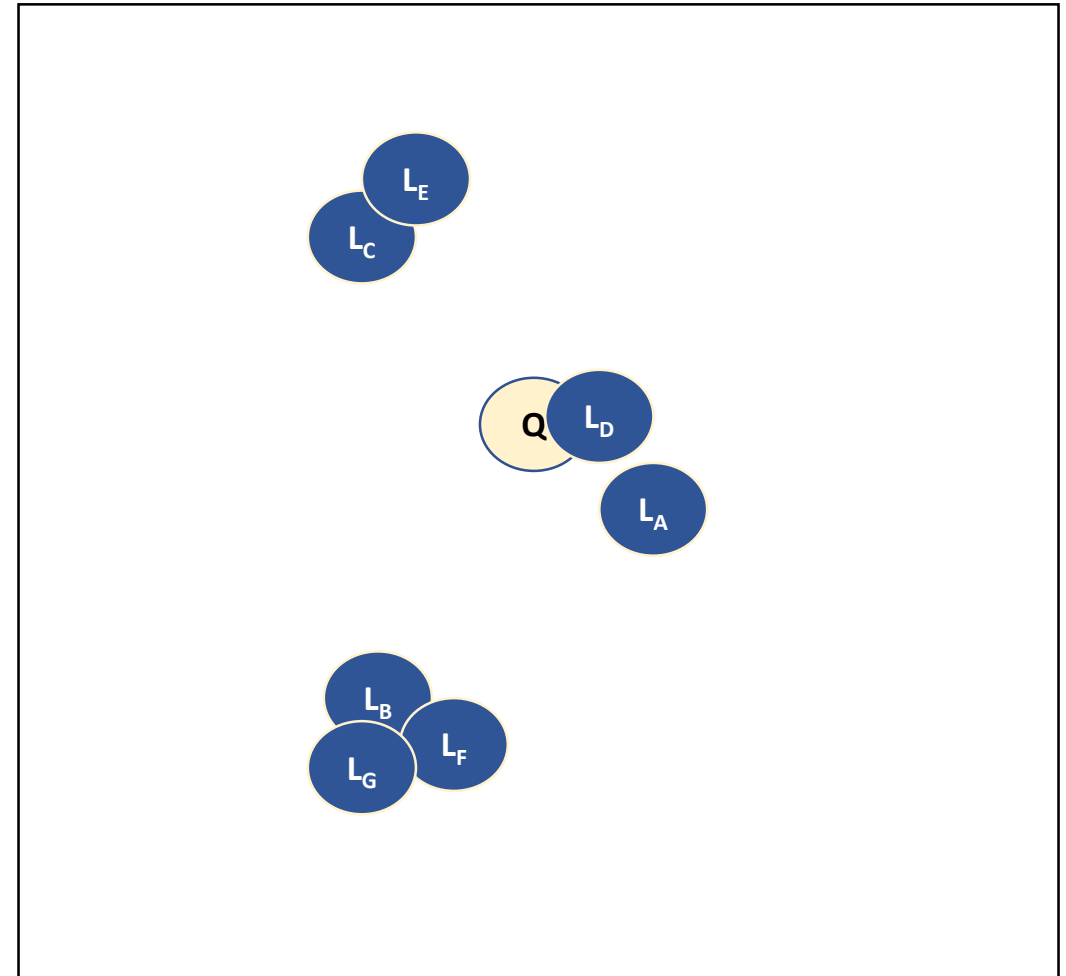
# EI-MS: Fentanyl Classifier

## Mass spectral library searching

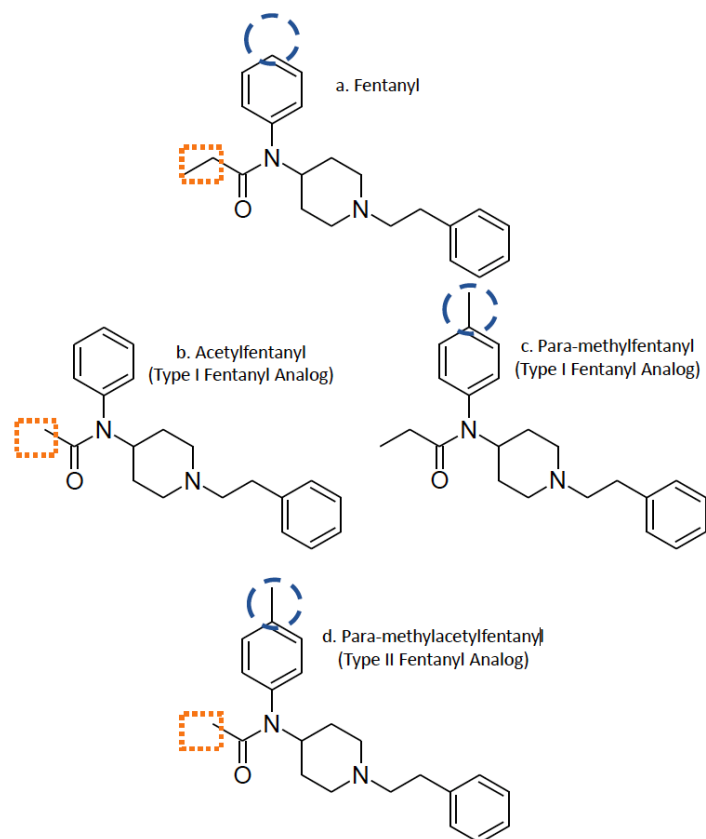
(1) Measure Similarity (2) Rank by Similarity



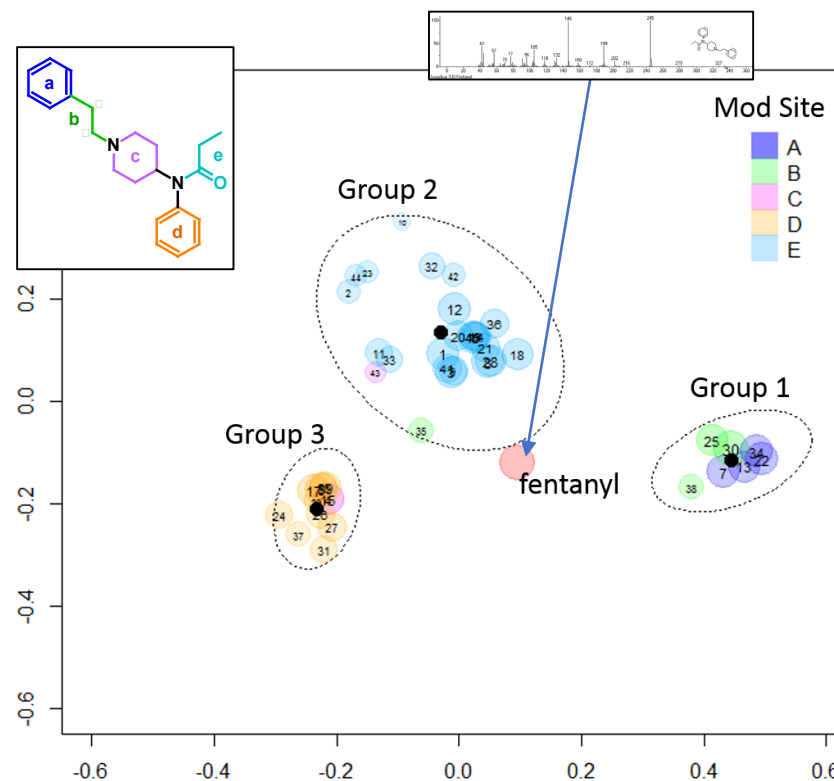
## Mass spectral similarity mapping



# EI-MS: Fentanyl Classifier



Examples of fentanyl and fentanyl analogs, with colored shapes demonstrating the sites at which the analogs differ from the fentanyl



Example of 2D mass spectral similarity map created by the NIST Fentanyl Classifier. Each circle represents a mass spectrum. Based on where a query spectrum lands in this space, an analyst can determine whether it is a fentanyl analog (with up to two modifications) or not.

## Software Availability:

1. NIST Fentanyl Classifier (2020): <http://github.com/asm3-nist/FentanylClassifier>

## Relevant Publications:

1. Moorthy et. al. "Combining fragment-ion and neutral-loss matching during mass spectral library searching: A new general purpose algorithm applicable to illicit drug identification." *Analytical chemistry* 89, no. 24 (2017): 13261-13268.
2. Moorthy et. al. "Mass spectral similarity mapping applied to fentanyl analogs." *Forensic Chemistry* 19 (2020): 100237.
3. Moorthy & Kearsley. "Pattern similarity measures applied to mass spectra". To appear in "Progress in Industrial Mathematics" (2021)
4. Kearsley & Moorthy. "Mathematics and Mass Spectra: Model problems to study the Fentanyl epidemic". Submitted July 2021.



# Fentanyl Classifier

The Fentanyl Classifier is a prototype implementation of "augmented mass spectral library searching". The software was designed for demonstration purposes. The authors cannot guarantee the accuracy of results generated using the Fentanyl Classifier, and cannot validate claims of others using this software.

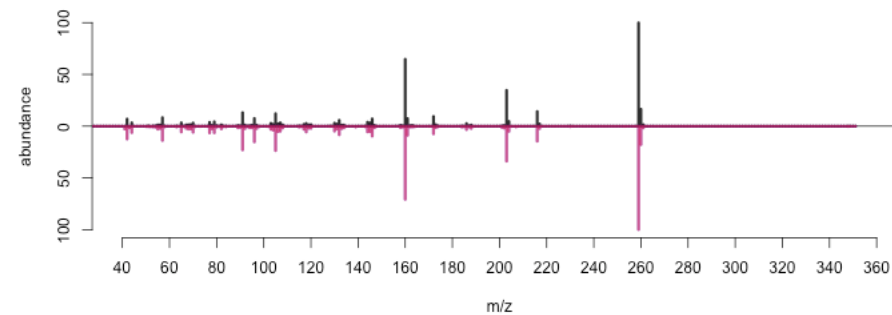
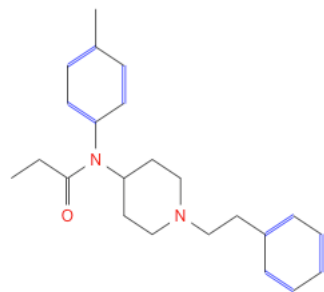
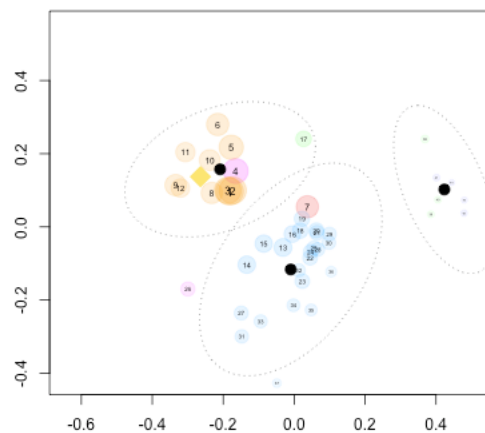
## Choose Query Spectrum (MSP File)

Browse... 248327.MSP

Upload complete

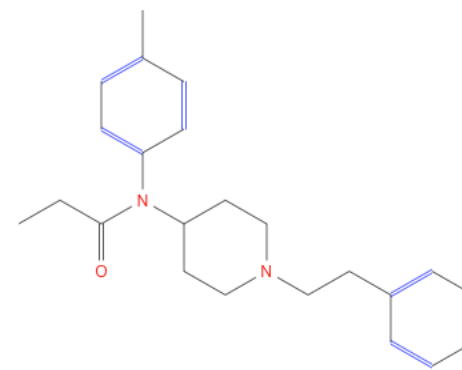
Potential structure based on library search results. **Disclaimer: The authors do not guarantee the accuracy of this result or claims of others based on results generated using this tool.**

No molecular weight information available from Query MSP. An estimate of 350 Da was generated by adding 91 Da to the highest mass with intensity greater than 800.

[Hit List](#)[Hit Map](#)[Fentanyl Structure Definition](#)

### Library Compound:

Name: para-Methylfentanyl  
 Formula: C<sub>23</sub>H<sub>30</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O  
 Exact Mass: 350.236  
 MW: 350  
 InChIKey: [XHWYYMNEJCMADF-UHFFFAOYSA-N](#)



# Fentanyl Classifier

The Fentanyl Classifier is a prototype implementation of "augmented mass spectral library searching". The software was designed for demonstration purposes. The authors cannot guarantee the accuracy of results generated using the Fentanyl Classifier, and cannot validate claims of others using this software.

## Choose Query Spectrum (MSP File)

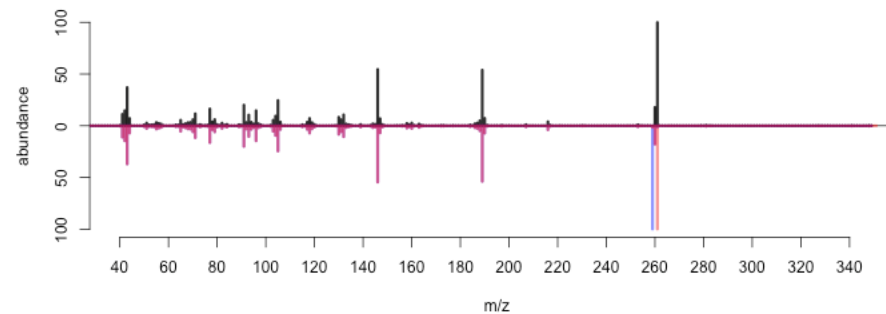
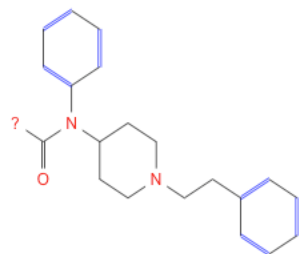
Browse...

synthType1E.MSP

Upload complete

Potential structure based on library search results. **Disclaimer: The authors do not guarantee the accuracy of this result or claims of others based on results generated using this tool.**

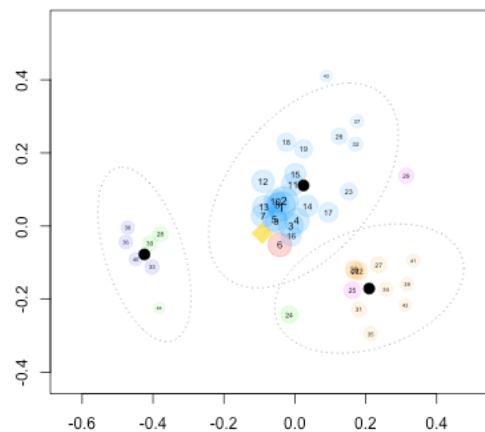
No molecular weight information available from Query MSP. An estimate of 352 Da was generated by adding 91 Da to the highest mass with intensity greater than 800.



Hit List

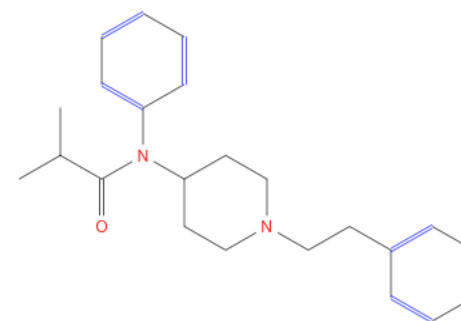
Hit Map

Fentanyl Structure Definition

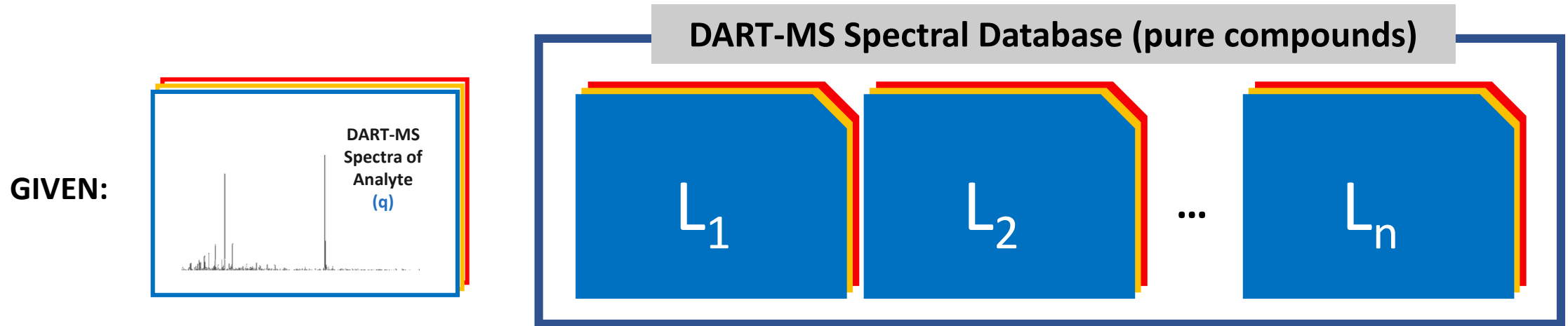


### Library Compound:

Name: Isobutyryl fentanyl  
 Formula: C<sub>23</sub>H<sub>30</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O  
 Exact Mass: 350.236  
 MW: 350  
 InChIKey: [WRPFPNIHTOSMKU-UHFFFAOYSA-N](#)



# DART-MS: Inverted Search Procedure

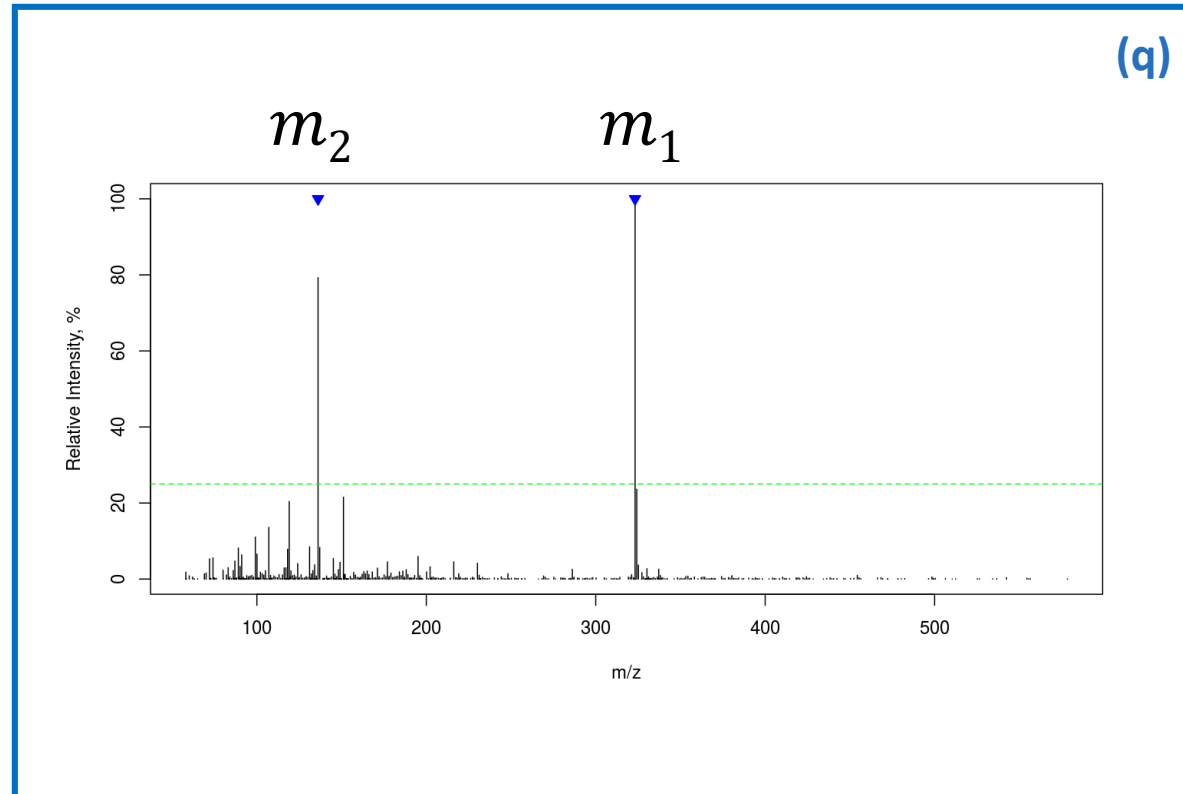


*Assumption 1:* The component molecules contained in a mixture will each present an  $[M + H]^+$  peak in the low energy spectrum and the relative intensity of these peaks will be greater than a threshold intensity.

# DART-MS: Inverted Search Procedure

## *Assumption 2a:*

Reference mass spectra of the component molecules contained in the analyte are available in a searchable database.

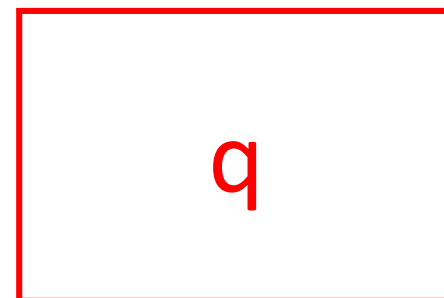
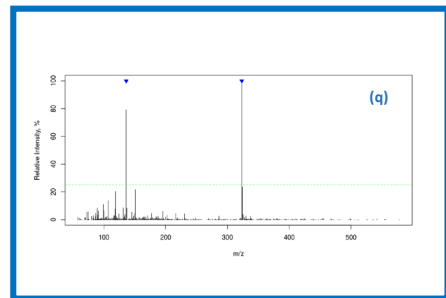


## *Assumption 2b:*

The difference between protonated molecule  $m/z$  values of database entries and those observed in the query is accurate to a known resolution  $\pm \epsilon_0$ .

# DART-MS: Inverted Search Procedure

Target:  $m_1$



$$\phi_{m_1, L_4} = g(\underbrace{f_1(q, L_4, q, L_4, q, L_4, P)}_{\text{weighted fraction of abundance explained}}, \underbrace{f_2(q, L_4, q, L_4, q, L_4, P)}_{\text{weighted mass bias}}, \underbrace{f_3(q, L_4)}_{\text{mass difference}})$$

weighted fraction of abundance explained

weighted mass bias

mass difference

The NIST DART-MS Database Search Tool (DST) is an open-source research tool for analyzing DART-MS spectra of seized drugs. The authors cannot guarantee the accuracy nor validate the claims of others using results generated by this software.

For help or more information: [dartdata@nist.gov](mailto:dartdata@nist.gov)

**Search Mode:**

Pure Compound  Mixture Analysis

Query Spectra **Advanced**

These settings can be adjusted to address expected variations in MS sensitivity and resolution.

**min abundance of targets (mixture analysis)**

0.01 0.25 1

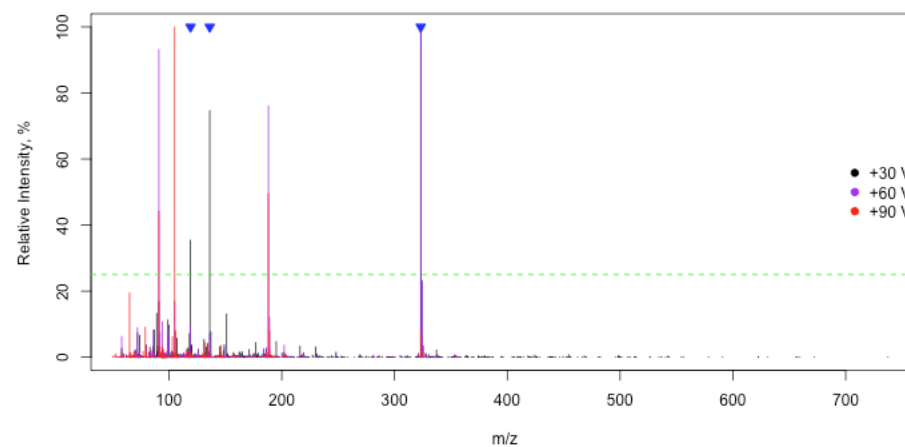
0.01 0.11 0.21 0.31 0.41 0.51 0.61 0.71 0.81 0.91 1

**m/z tolerance**

Integer resolution spectra.

0.005 0.1

0 0.01 0.02 0.03 0.04 0.05 0.06 0.07 0.08 0.09 0.1

**Collapsed Query Mass Spectra**

Target 1 Target 2 Target 3

Mass-to-charge: 119.085  
Relative intensity: 35.4 %.

No matches in database.

# Summary of Tools

**AMDIS:** Automates extraction of GC-MS data files to generate consistent/reproducible mass spectra.

- Built-in “standard” library search procedure

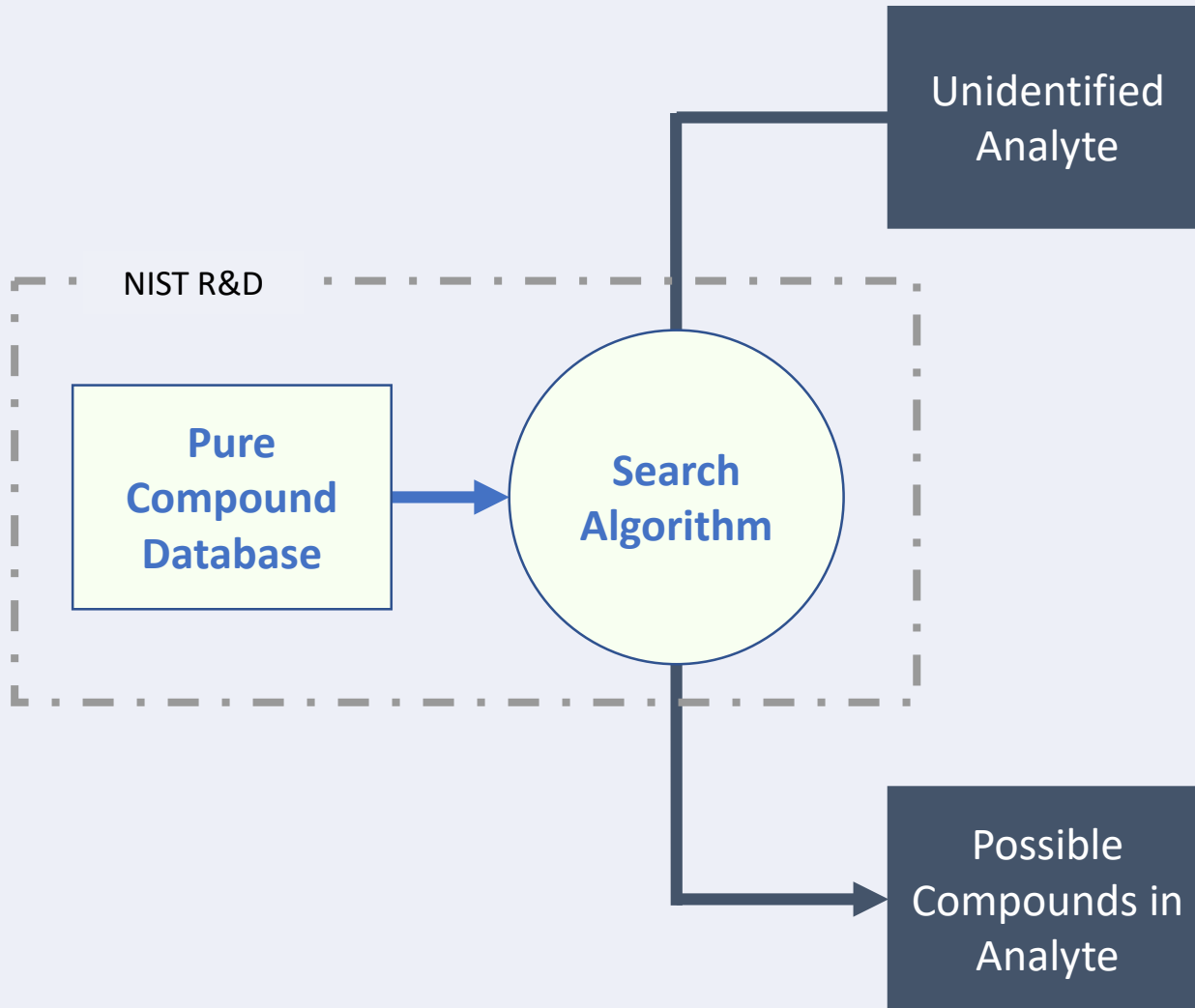
**MS SEARCH/Interpreter:** A comprehensive tool for interacting with mass spectral libraries, including a variety of useful search algorithms and data interpretation tools.

**Fentanyl Classifier:** A tool specifically for interacting with mass spectra of potential fentanyl analogs, attempting to localize the site of modification.

Available: <https://github.com/asm3-nist/FentanylClassifier>

**Inverted Search Algorithm:** A new method currently in preparation for identifying components in DART-MS.

For status updates: [DARTdata@nist.gov](mailto:DARTdata@nist.gov)



# Questions?

[arun.moorthy@nist.gov](mailto:arun.moorthy@nist.gov)





# Benchtop NMR for Forensic Drug Analysis

Aaron Urbas

Chemical Sciences Division, Material Measurement Laboratory  
National Institute of Standards & Technology  
Gaithersburg, Maryland USA

# Outline

- NMR at a Glance
- Benchtop NMR
- Fentanyl Analog Differentiation with  $^1\text{H}$  low-field/benchtop NMR Spectra
- Fluorine ( $^{19}\text{F}$ ) low-field/benchtop NMR
- Quantum Mechanic Spectral Analysis (QMSA) of  $^1\text{H}$  NMR Spectra and Translation of  $^1\text{H}$  Spectra Across Magnet Field Strengths
- Recent Sample Investigations
- Conclusion & Acknowledgements

# NMR at a Glance

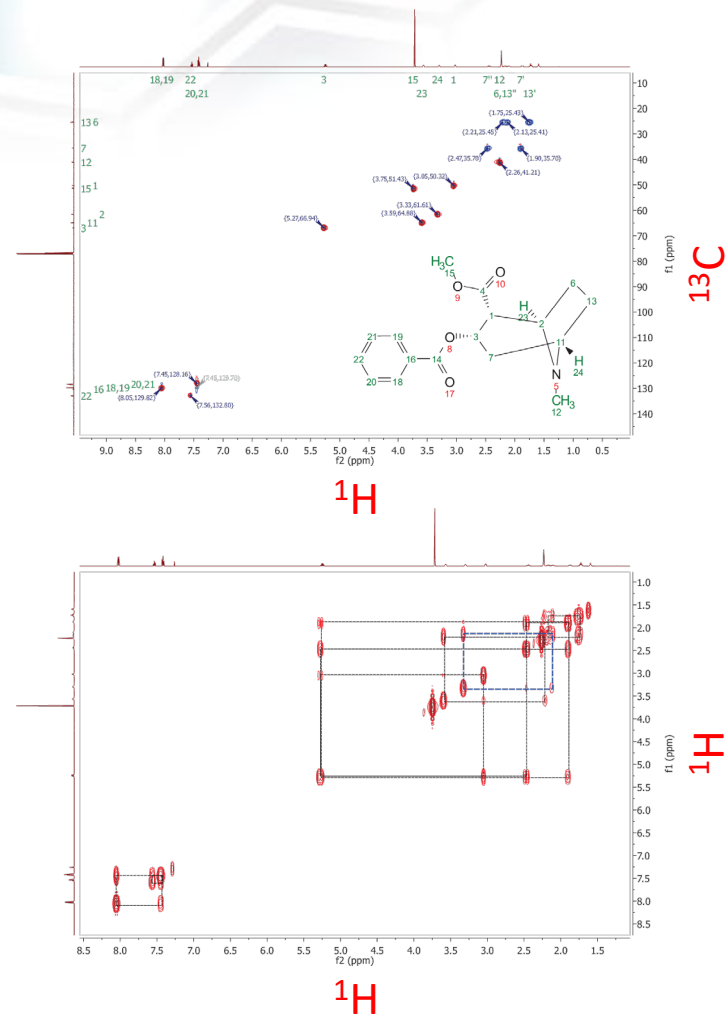
## □ Powerful Structure Elucidation Tool

- NMR Active Nuclei (Spin  $\frac{1}{2}$ )
  - $^1\text{H}$ ,  $^{13}\text{C}$ ,  $^{15}\text{N}$ ,  $^{19}\text{F}$ ,  $^{31}\text{P}$  mainly
- 2D experiments offer a wealth of connectivity information
  - COSY :  $^1\text{H}$ - $^1\text{H}$  single bond correlations
  - TOCSY :  $^1\text{H}$ - $^1\text{H}$  multi-bond correlations
  - HSQC :  $^1\text{H}$ -X single-bond single bond connectivity
  - HMBC, HMQC :  $^1\text{H}$ -X multi-bond single bond connectivity

There are **MANY** more methods including variants of these and others.

## □ Analytical Tool

- Quantification
  - Absolute purity determinations against a reference material
  - Quantification of multiple compounds from a single internal (or external) standard
- Powerful screening method for unknowns
  - In most cases, if it's soluble and has a proton you can see it

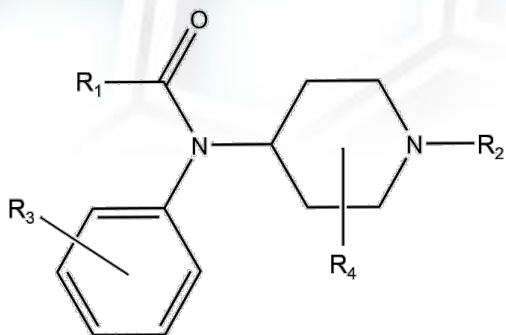


# Benchtop NMR

- 40 – 90 MHz Permanent Magnet Systems
- Range from ~ \$40K - \$100K
- No cryogenics, little maintenance
- Easy to Use
- Portable to varying extents
- Some 2D spectral capabilities
- **Drawbacks**
  - **Sensitivity & Resolution**



# Fentanyl Analog Benchtop NMR Evaluation



General fentanyl structure labeling  
functional groups and opportunity for  
modification

**In the case of fentanyl:**

- R1) N-propionyl group
- R2) phenethyl group
- R3) aniline ring
- R4) piperidine ring

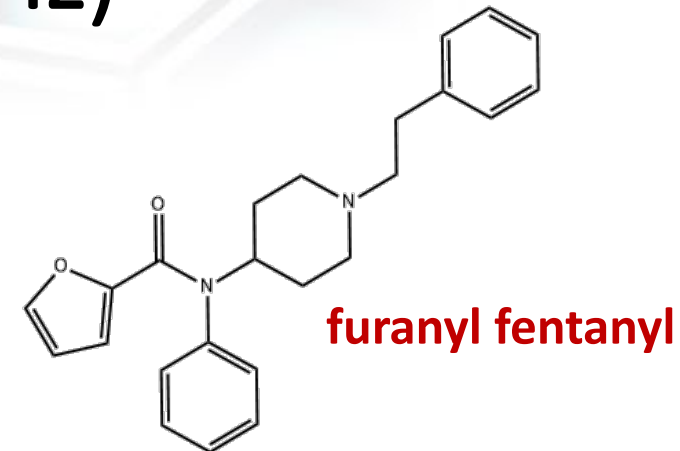
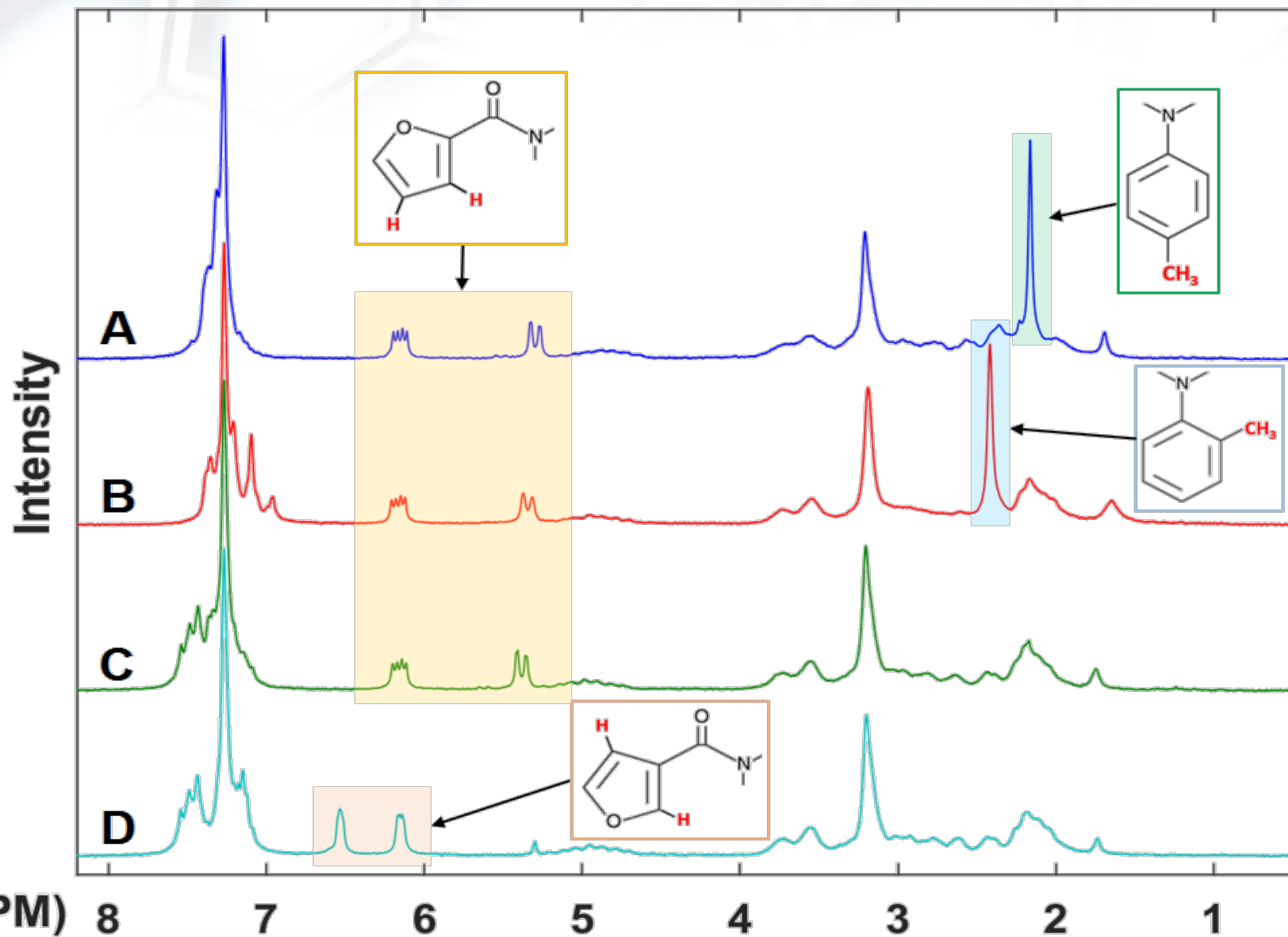
65 fentanyl analogs and related compounds were examined  
All samples were prepared in CDCl<sub>3</sub> (~5 mg in 0.6-0.7 mL)

| Name                                      | MW    | R1   | R2                                      | R3                  |
|---|-------|--|---|---------------------|
| Fentanyl HCl                              | 372.9 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>3</sub>                 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> Ph     |                     |
| Fentanyl                                  | 336.5 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>3</sub>                 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> Ph     |                     |
| Norfentanyl                               | 232.3 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>3</sub>                 | -H                                      |                     |
| <i>α</i> -Methyl Fentanyl HCl             | 387.0 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>3</sub>                 | -CH(CH <sub>3</sub> )CH <sub>2</sub> Ph |                     |
| <i>β</i> -Methyl Fentanyl HCl             | 387.0 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>3</sub>                 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH(CH <sub>3</sub> )Ph |                     |
| <i>ortho</i> -Methylfentanyl HCl          | 387.0 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>3</sub>                 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> Ph     | -2-CH <sub>3</sub>  |
| <i>meta</i> -Methylfentanyl HCl           | 387.0 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>3</sub>                 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> Ph     | -3-CH <sub>3</sub>  |
| <i>para</i> -Methylfentanyl HCl           | 387.0 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>3</sub>                 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> Ph     | -4-CH <sub>3</sub>  |
| <i>β</i> -hydroxy Fentanyl HCl            | 388.9 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>3</sub>                 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH(OH)Ph               |                     |
| 3-Fluorofentanyl HCl* <sup>a</sup>        | 390.9 | -  | -                                       | -                   |
| <i>ortho</i> -Fluorofentanyl HCl          | 390.9 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>3</sub>                 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> Ph     | -2-F                |
| <i>meta</i> -Fluorofentanyl HCl           | 390.9 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>3</sub>                 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> Ph     | -3-F                |
| <i>para</i> -Fluorofentanyl HCl           | 390.9 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>3</sub>                 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> Ph     | -4-F                |
| <i>para</i> -Chlorofentanyl HCl           | 407.4 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>3</sub>                 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> Ph     | -4-Cl               |
| Despropionyl <i>ortho</i> -Fluorofentanyl | 298.4 | -H   | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> Ph     | -2-F                |
| Despropionyl <i>meta</i> -Fluorofentanyl  | 298.4 | -H   | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> Ph     | -3-F                |
| Despropionyl <i>para</i> -Fluorofentanyl  | 298.4 | -H   | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> Ph     | -4-F                |
| Butyryl Fentanyl HCl                      | 387.0 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>3</sub> | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> Ph     |                     |
| <i>α</i> -Methyl Butyryl Fentanyl HCl     | 401.0 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>3</sub> | -CH(CH <sub>3</sub> )CH <sub>2</sub> Ph |                     |
| <i>ortho</i> -Fluorobutyryl Fentanyl HCl  | 405.0 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>3</sub> | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> Ph     | -2-F                |
| <i>meta</i> -Fluorobutyryl Fentanyl HCl   | 405.0 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>3</sub> | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> Ph     | -3-F                |
| <i>para</i> -Fluorobutyryl Fentanyl HCl   | 405.0 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>3</sub> | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> Ph     | -4-F                |
| <i>para</i> -Chlorobutyryl Fentanyl HCl   | 421.4 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>3</sub> | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> Ph     | -4-Cl               |
| <i>para</i> -methoxy Butyryl Fentanyl HCl | 417.0 | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>3</sub> | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> Ph     | -4-OCH <sub>3</sub> |
| Isobutyryl Fentanyl HCl                   | 387.0 | -CH(CH <sub>3</sub> )CH <sub>3</sub>             | -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> Ph     |                     |

the list goes on....

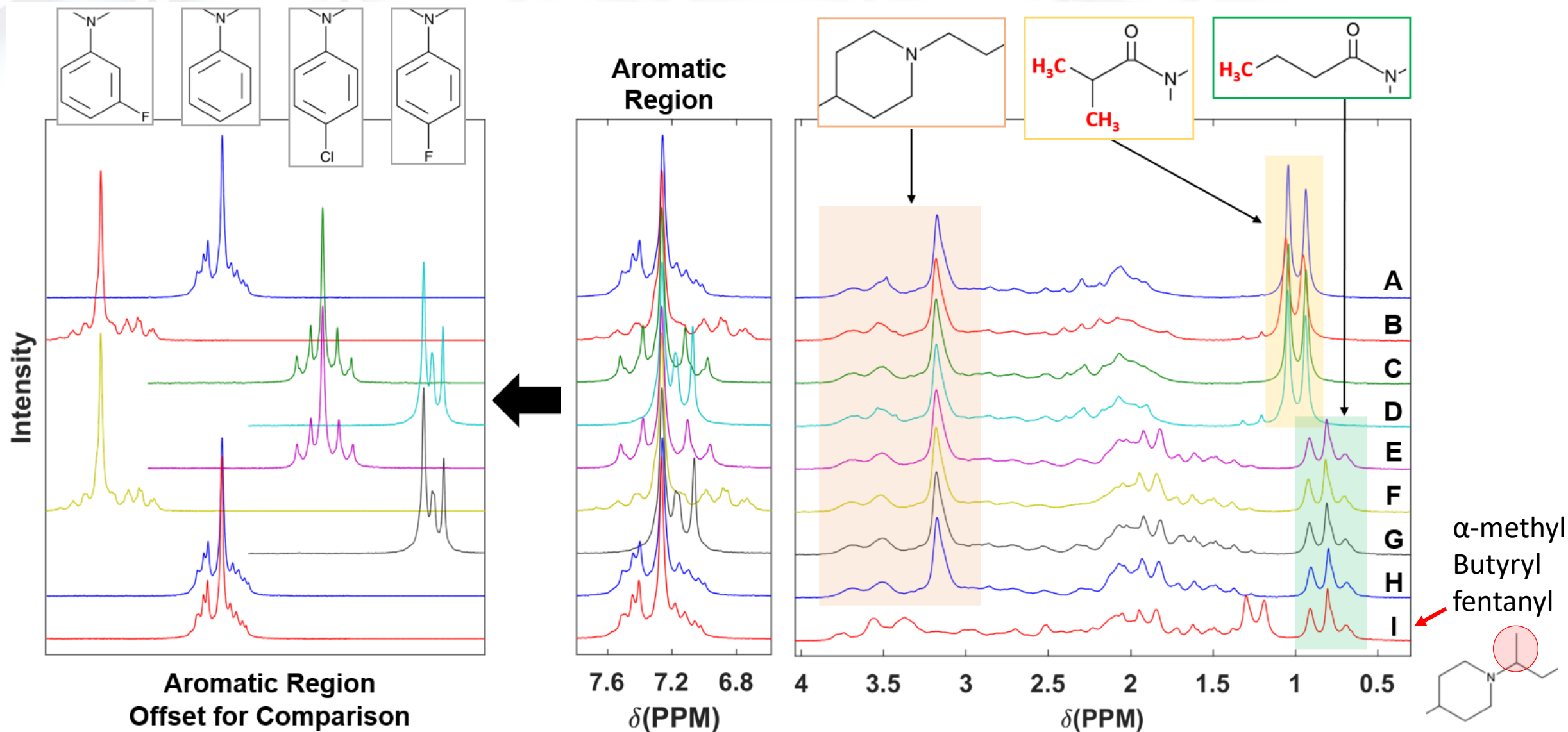
Duffy J, Urbas A, Niemitz M, Lippa K, Marginean I, "Differentiation of fentanyl analogues by low-field NMR spectroscopy." *Anal Chim Acta*, 2019, 1049:161-169

# Furanyl Fentanyl Analogs (1H NMR, 62 MHz)

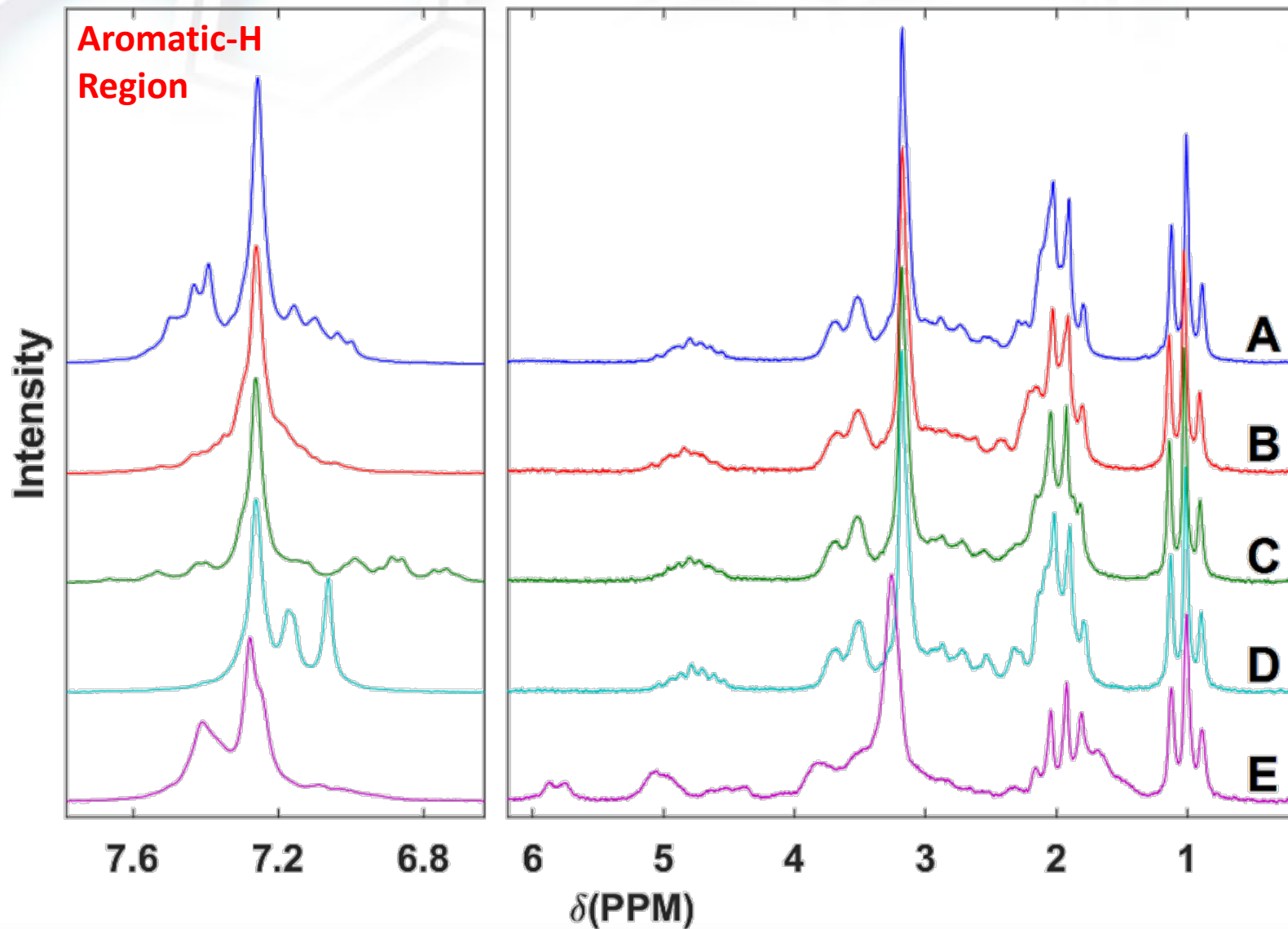


- A) para-methyl furanyl fentanyl
- B) ortho-methyl furanyl fentanyl
- C) furanyl fentanyl
- D) furanyl fentanyl 3-furancarboxamide isomer

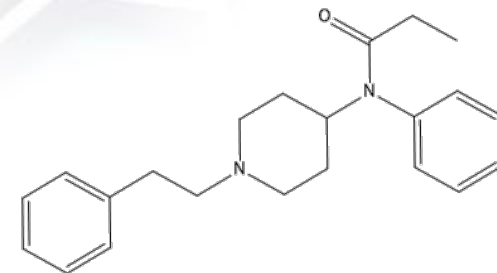
# Butyryl Fentanyl Analogs (1H NMR, 62 MHz)



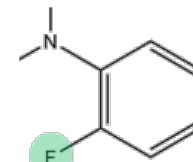
# Fluorofentanyl Analogs (1H NMR, 62 MHz)



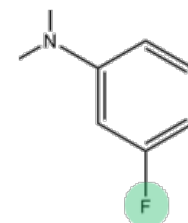
A) fentanyl



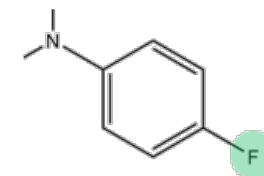
B) o-fluorofentanyl



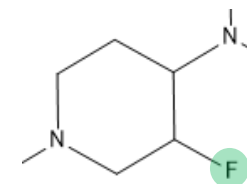
C) m-fluorofentanyl



D) p-fluorofentanyl

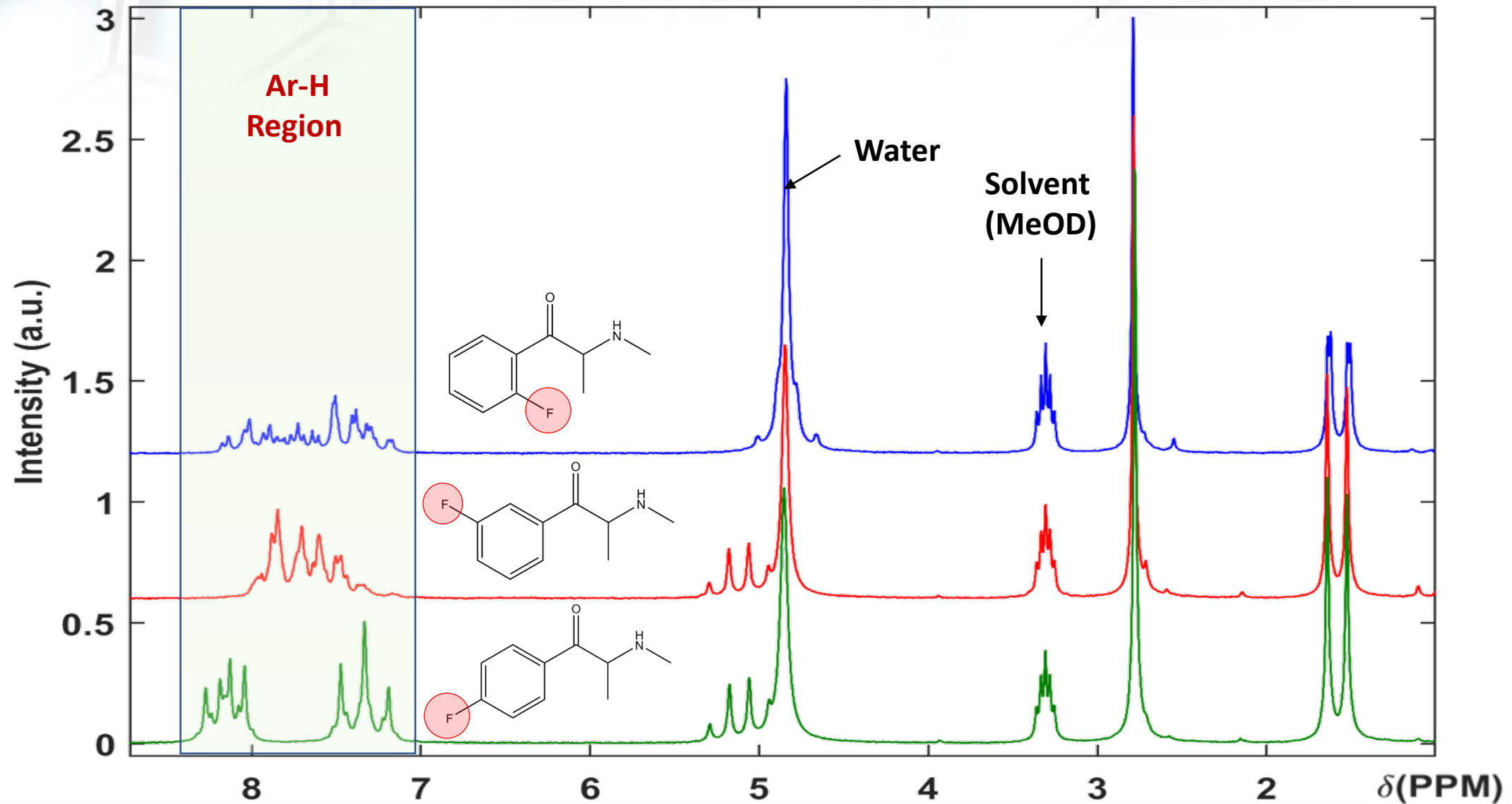


E) 3-fluorofentanyl

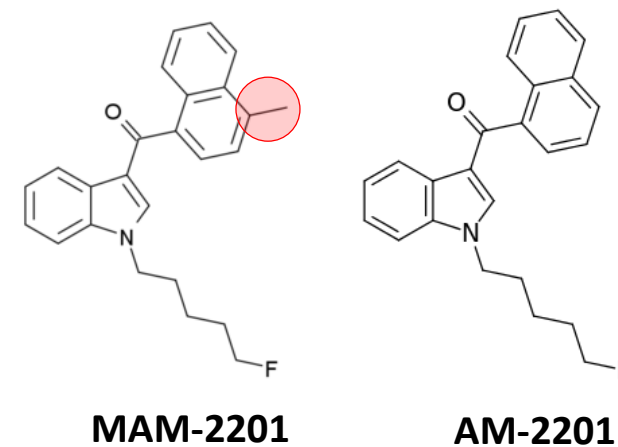
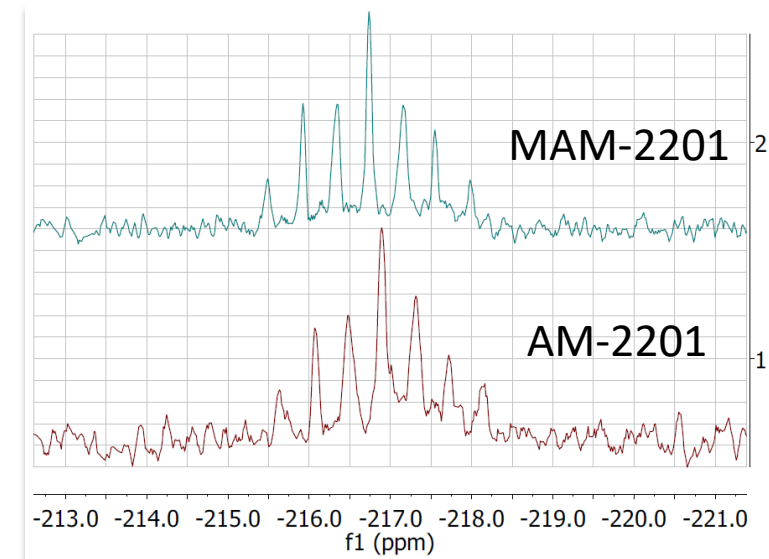
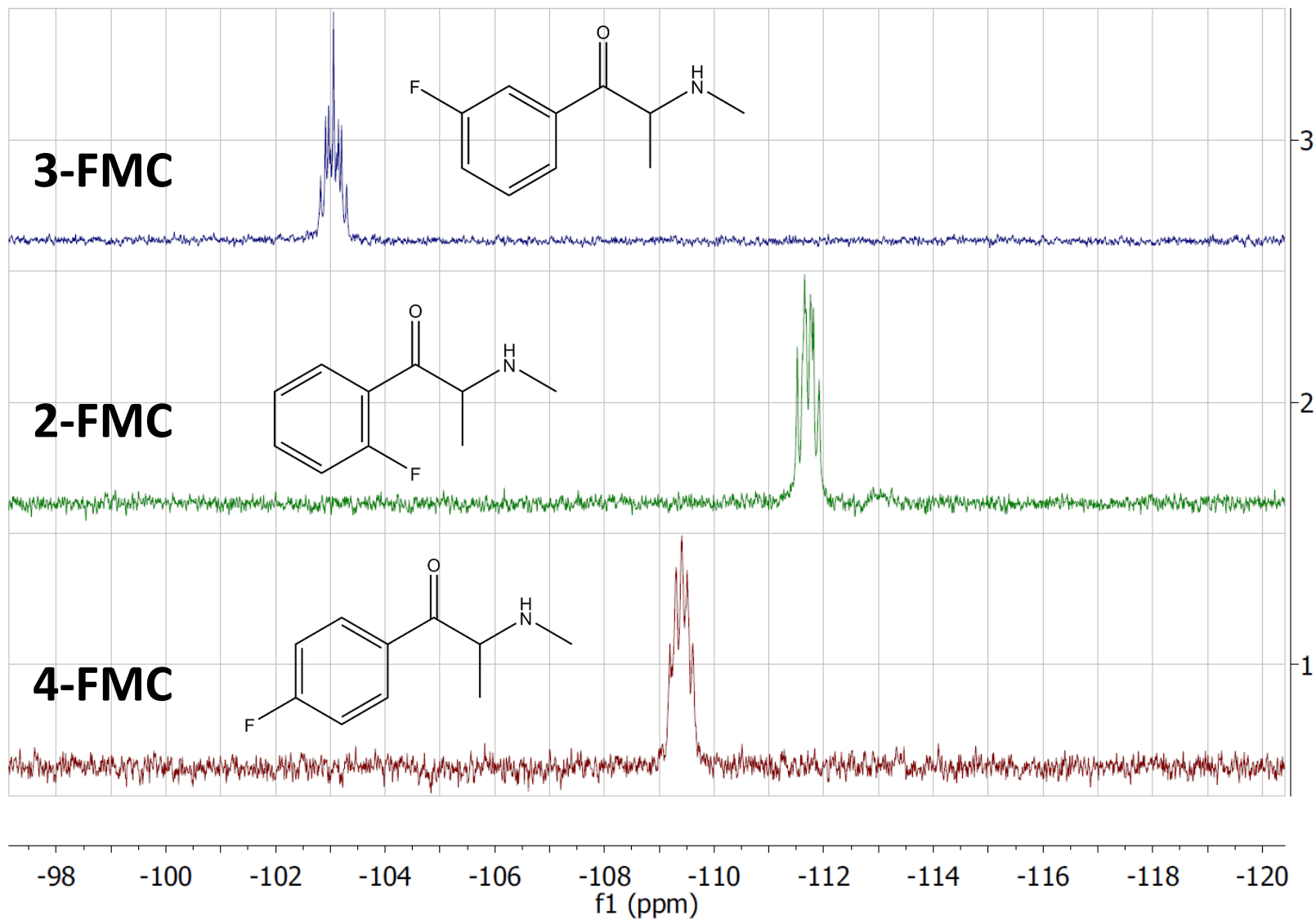




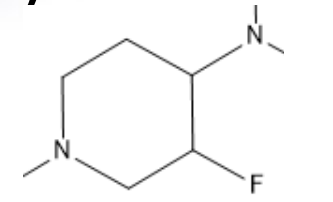
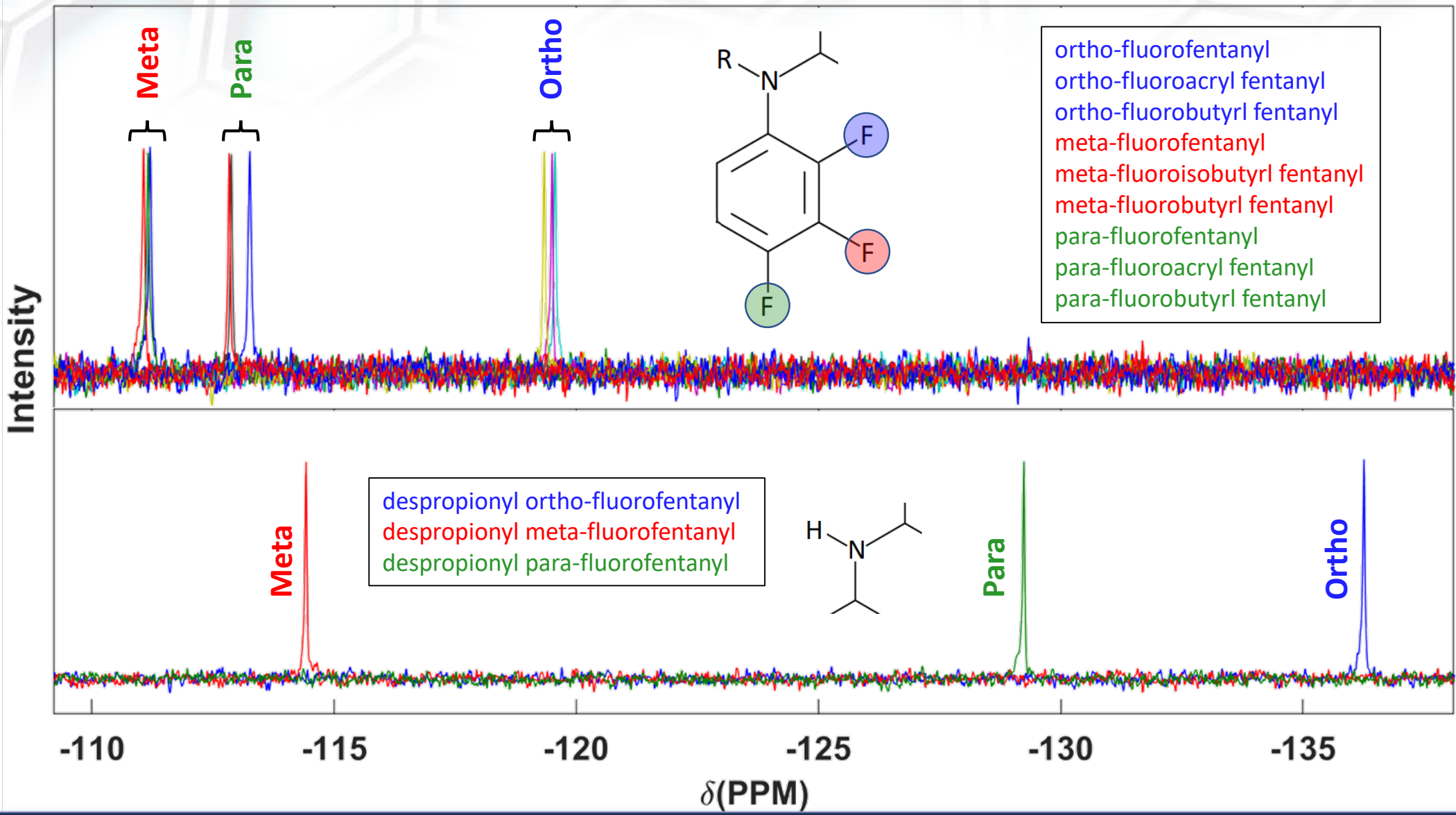
# Fluoromethcathinone Isomers ( $^1\text{H}$ , 62 MHz, MeOD)



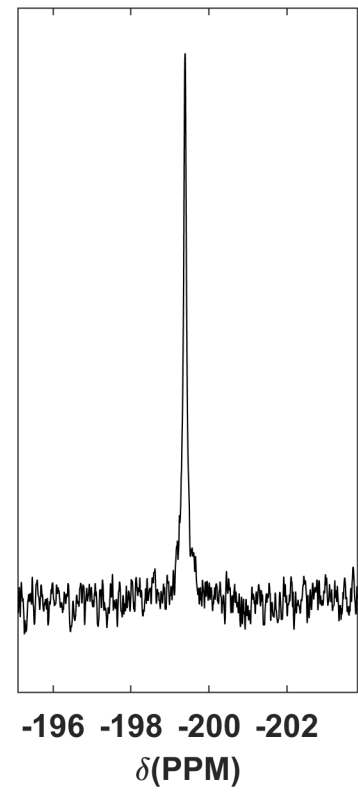
# $^{19}\text{F}$ NMR Spectra ( $\sim 58$ MHz)



# $^{19}\text{F}$ NMR of Fluorinated Fentanyl Analogs (1H Decoupled)



3-fluorofentanyl

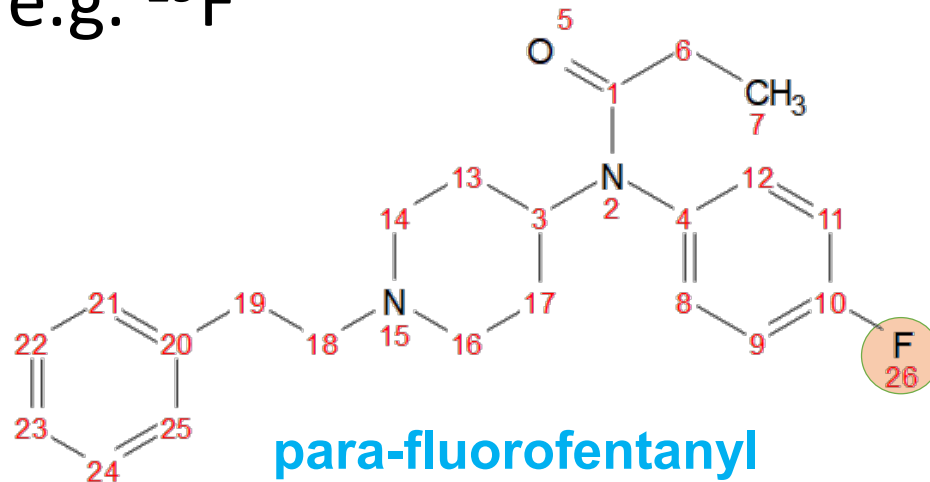


# Outline

- NMR at a Glance
- Benchtop NMR
- Fentanyl Analog Differentiation with  $^1\text{H}$  low-field/benchtop NMR Spectra
- Fluorine ( $^{19}\text{F}$ ) low-field/benchtop NMR
- Quantum Mechanic Spectral Analysis (QMSA) of  $^1\text{H}$  NMR Spectra and translation of  $^1\text{H}$  Spectra Across Magnet Field Strengths
- Recent Sample Investigations
- Conclusion & Acknowledgements

# Can We Better Utilize $^1\text{H}$ Spectra?

- Wealth of structural information available
- Proton counts
- Chemical shift structure correlations
- Connectivity via couplings and coupling constants
- Indirect heteronuclear information through coupling, e.g.  $^{19}\text{F}$

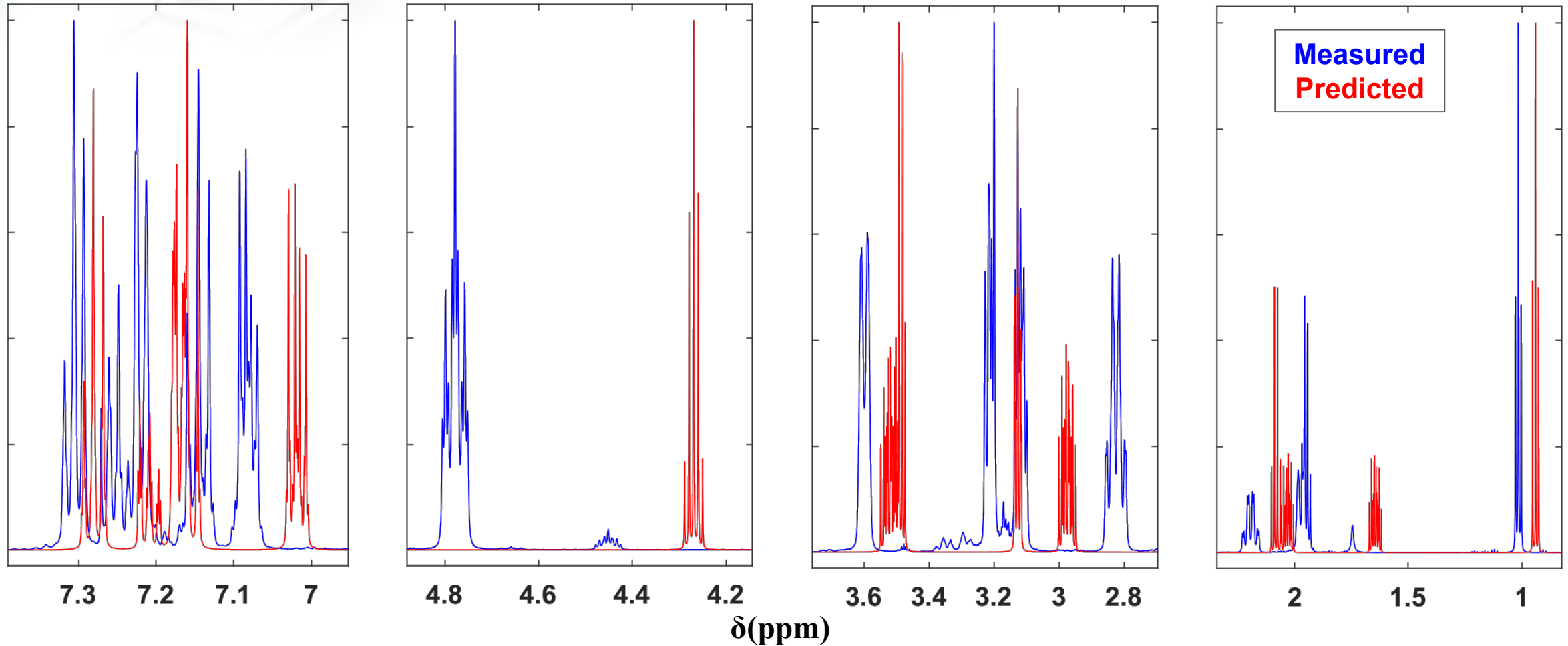


Predicted Chemical Shifts & Coupling Constants for para-fluorofentanyl

| Atom                 | Shift (ppm) | J (Hz)       |       |
|----------------------|-------------|--------------|-------|
| 3 CH                 | 4.27        | J(3-13')     | 5.78  |
|                      |             | J(3-13'')    | 5.78  |
|                      |             | J(3-17')     | 5.78  |
|                      |             | J(3-17'')    | 5.78  |
| 6 CH <sub>2</sub>    | 2.082       | J(6)         | 14.56 |
|                      |             | J(6-7)       | 7.89  |
| 7 CH <sub>3</sub>    | 0.94        | J(7-6)       | 7.89  |
|                      |             | J(7)         | 6.99  |
| 8 CH                 | 7.019       | J(8-9)       | 8.43  |
|                      |             | J(8-12)      | 1.5   |
|                      |             | J(8-26)      | 5     |
| 9 CH                 | 7.156       | J(9-8)       | 8.43  |
|                      |             | J(9-11)      | 1.5   |
|                      |             | J(9-26)      | 8     |
| 11 CH                | 7.156       | J(11-9)      | 1.5   |
|                      |             | J(11-12)     | 8.43  |
|                      |             | J(11-26)     | 8     |
| 12 CH                | 7.019       | J(12-8)      | 1.5   |
|                      |             | J(12-11)     | 8.43  |
|                      |             | J(12-26)     | 5     |
| 13' CH <sub>2</sub>  | 1.645       | J(13'-3)     | 5.78  |
|                      |             | J(13'-13'')  | 12.29 |
|                      |             | J(13'-14')   | 8.01  |
|                      |             | J(13'-14'')  | 5.65  |
| 13'' CH <sub>2</sub> | 2.031       | J(13''-3)    | 5.78  |
|                      |             | J(13''-13')  | 12.29 |
|                      |             | J(13''-14')  | 5.65  |
|                      |             | J(13''-14'') | 8.01  |

# Predicting $^1\text{H}$ NMR Spectra

## Measured vs Predicted Para-Fluorofentanyl $^1\text{H}$ NMR Spectra (600 MHz)



While predicted  $^1\text{H}$  spectra can be useful for spectral interpretation they often differ quite considerably from observed spectra in both chemical shifts and coupling constants.

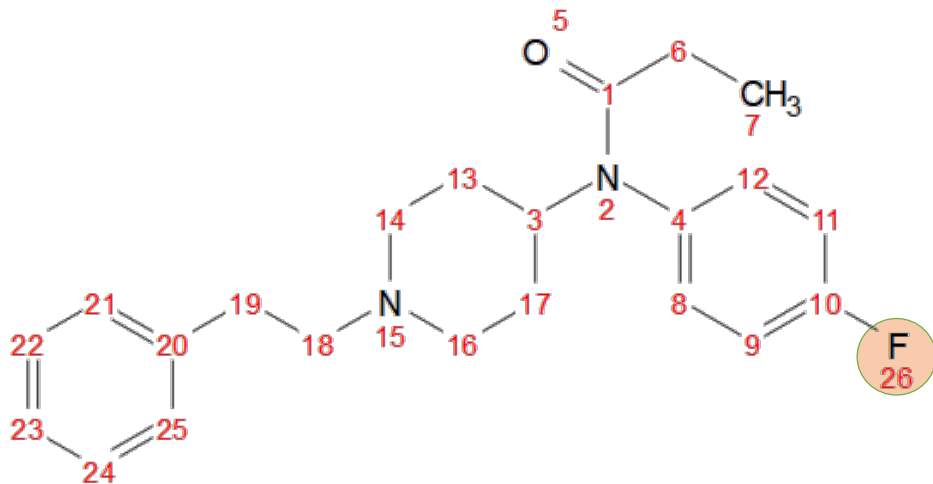
# Quantum Mechanic Spectral Analysis (QMSA)

Predicted Chemical Shifts & Coupling Constants

| Atom      | Shift (ppm) | J (Hz)        |       |
|-----------|-------------|---------------|-------|
| 3 CH      | 4.27        | J(3-13')      | 5.78  |
|           |             | J(3-13'')     | 5.78  |
|           |             | J(3-17')      | 5.78  |
|           |             | J(3-17'')     | 5.78  |
| 6 CH2     | 2.082       | J(6)          | 14.56 |
|           |             | J(6-7)        | 7.89  |
| 7 CH3     | 0.94        | J(7-6)        | 7.89  |
|           |             | J(7)          | 6.99  |
| 8 CH      | 7.019       | J(8-9)        | 8.43  |
|           |             | J(8-12)       | 1.5   |
|           |             | J(8-26)       | 5     |
| 9 CH      | 7.156       | J(9-8)        | 8.43  |
|           |             | J(9-11)       | 1.5   |
|           |             | J(9-26)       | 8     |
| 11 CH     | 7.156       | J(11-9)       | 1.5   |
|           |             | J(11-12)      | 8.43  |
|           |             | J(11-26)      | 8     |
| 12 CH     | 7.019       | J(12-8)       | 1.5   |
|           |             | J(12-11)      | 8.43  |
|           |             | J(12-26)      | 5     |
| 13' CH2   | 1.645       | J(13'-3)      | 5.78  |
|           |             | J(13'-13'')   | 12.29 |
|           |             | J(13'-14')    | 8.01  |
| 13'' CH2  | 2.031       | J(13''-3)     | 5.78  |
|           |             | J(13''-13')   | 12.29 |
|           |             | J(13''-14')   | 5.65  |
| 13''' CH2 | 2.031       | J(13'''-3)    | 5.78  |
|           |             | J(13'''-13'') | 12.29 |
|           |             | J(13'''-14'') | 8.01  |



Long story short....



Para-fluorofentanyl

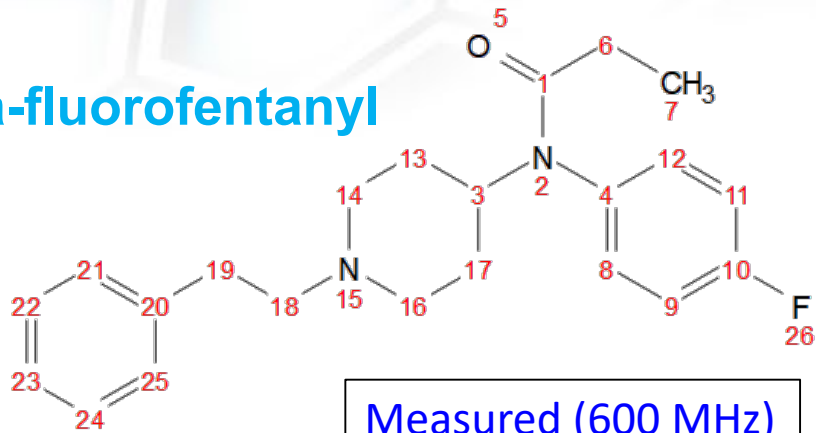
There are a total of 117 chemical shifts and couplings in the spin system utilized for this molecule, the tables only represent a subset.

Fit Chemical Shifts & Coupling Constants

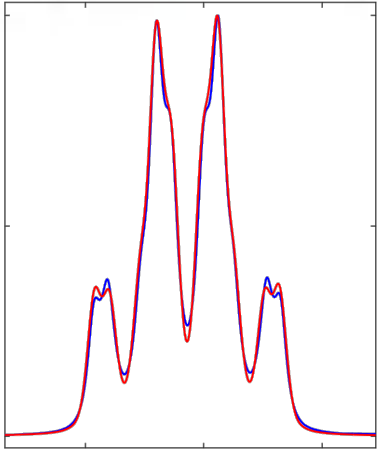
| Atom      | Shift (ppm) | J (Hz)        |          |
|-----------|-------------|---------------|----------|
| 3 CH      | 4.778       | J(3-13')      | 12.3336  |
|           |             | J(3-13'')     | 3.6189   |
|           |             | J(3-17')      | 12.3336  |
|           |             | J(3-17'')     | 3.6189   |
| 6 CH2     | 1.9495      | J(6)          | 14.56    |
|           |             | J(6-7)        | 7.4367   |
| 7 CH3     | 1.0157      | J(7-6)        | 7.4367   |
|           |             | J(7)          | 6.99     |
| 8 CH      | 7.0817      | J(8-9)        | 8.663    |
|           |             | J(8-12)       | 3.1175   |
|           |             | J(8-26)       | 4.7923   |
| 9 CH      | 7.1451      | J(9-8)        | 8.663    |
|           |             | J(9-11)       | 2.6866   |
|           |             | J(9-26)       | 8.0205   |
| 11 CH     | 7.1451      | J(11-9)       | 2.6866   |
|           |             | J(11-12)      | 8.663    |
|           |             | J(11-26)      | 8.0205   |
| 12 CH     | 7.0817      | J(12-8)       | 3.1175   |
|           |             | J(12-11)      | 8.663    |
|           |             | J(12-26)      | 4.7923   |
| 13' CH2   | 2.1927      | J(13'-3)      | 12.3336  |
|           |             | J(13'-13'')   | -13.6442 |
|           |             | J(13'-14')    | 13.0136  |
| 13'' CH2  | 1.9738      | J(13''-3)     | 3.6189   |
|           |             | J(13''-13')   | -13.6442 |
|           |             | J(13''-14')   | 3.1651   |
| 13''' CH2 | 1.9738      | J(13'''-3)    | 3.6189   |
|           |             | J(13'''-13'') | -13.6442 |
|           |             | J(13'''-14'') | 3.1276   |

# Quantum Mechanic Spectral Analysis (QMSA)

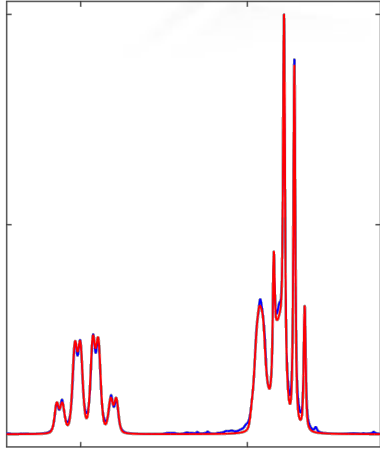
Para-fluorofentanyl



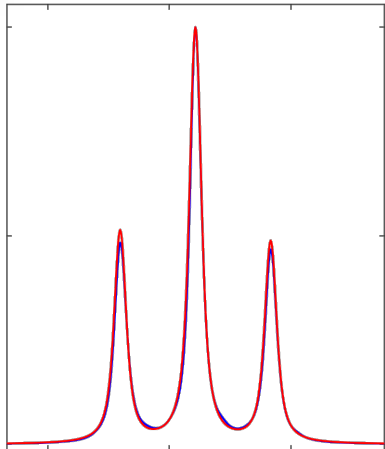
Measured (600 MHz)  
QMSA Model



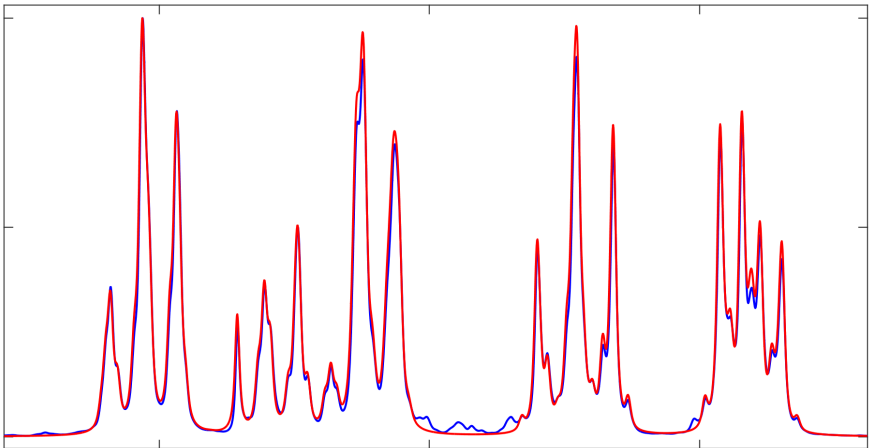
2.86 2.82 2.78



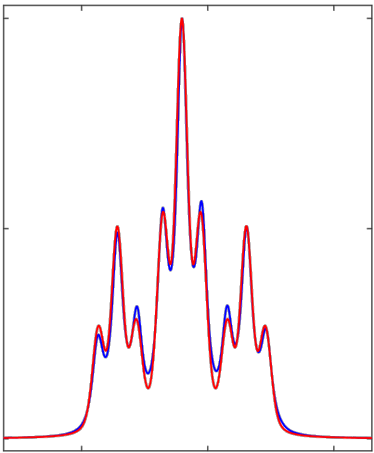
2.2 2



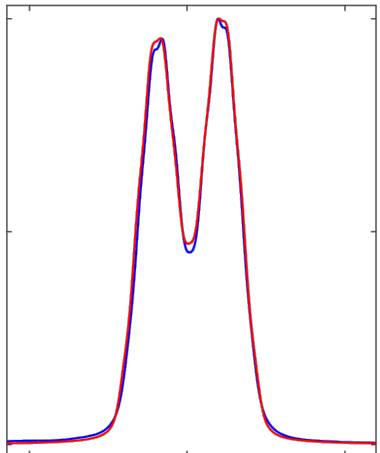
1.04 1.02 1



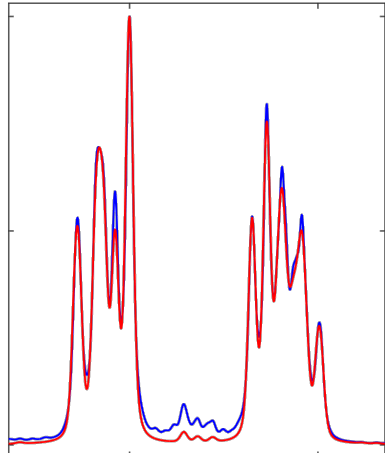
7.3 7.2 7.1  
 $\delta(\text{ppm})$



4.81 4.77 4.73  
 $\delta(\text{ppm})$



3.65 3.6 3.55  
 $\delta(\text{ppm})$



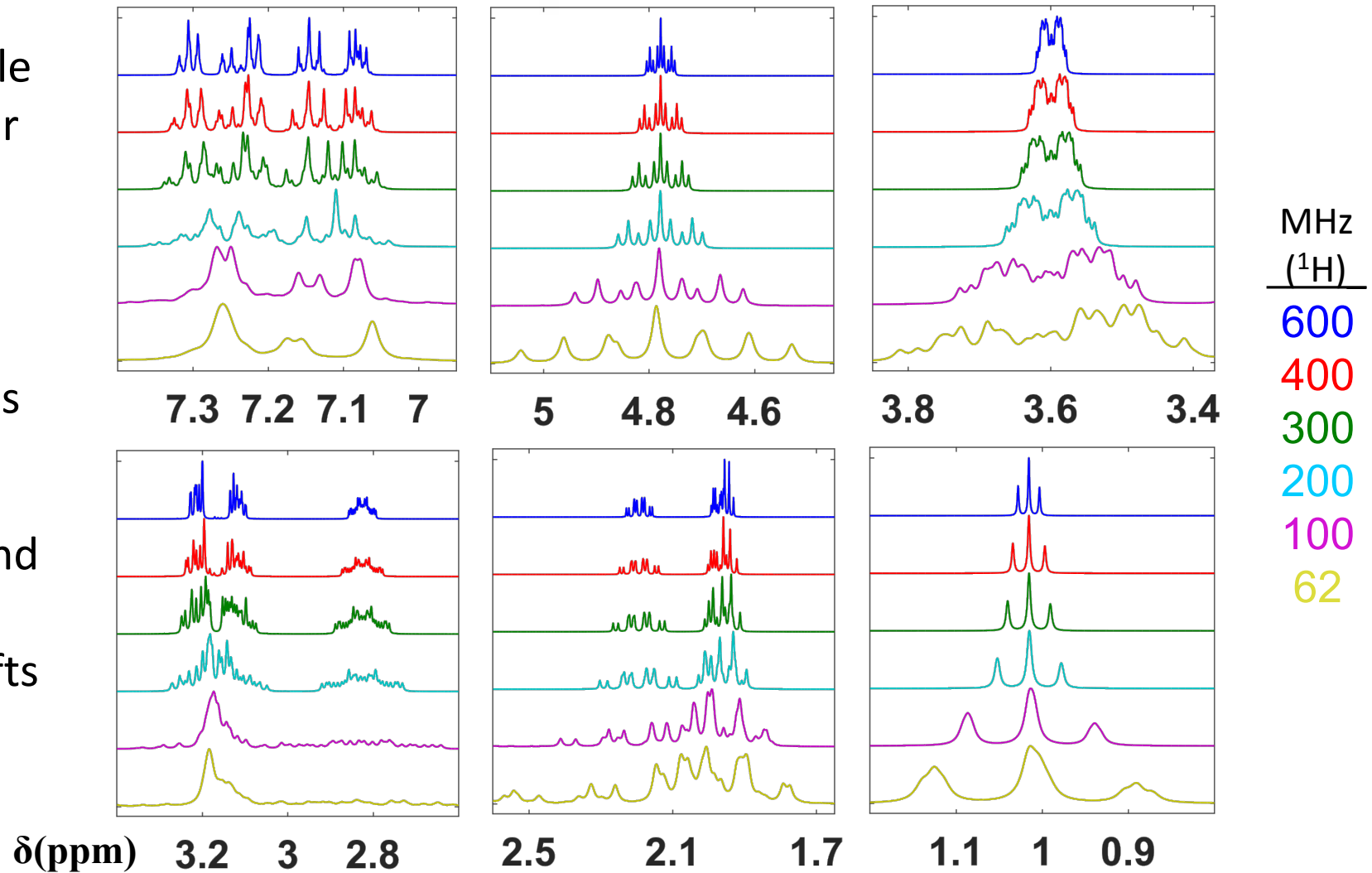
3.2 3.1  
 $\delta(\text{ppm})$



# Field Translation of $^1\text{H}$ NMR Spectra using Spin-System Models

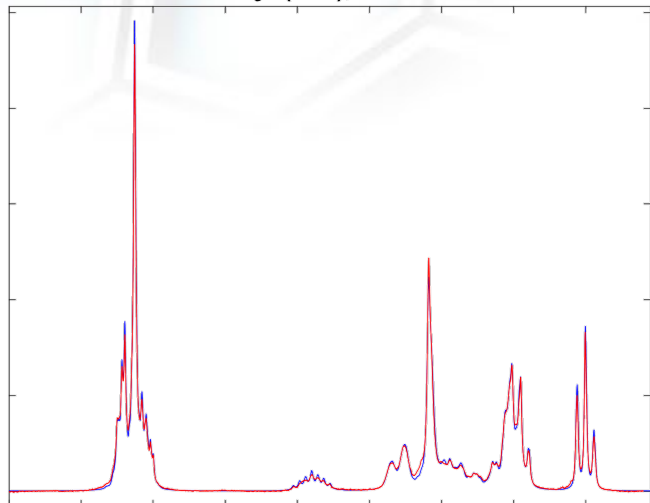
- ❑ QMSA models are field independent and thus portable to different magnetic fields for reproducing spectral information.
- ❑ QMSA models are free of solvent and impurity signals as well as instrumental artifacts
- ❑ QMSA models are adaptive and enable handling of small perturbations in chemical shifts and coupling constants between samples.

## Spin-System Evaluated at Various Field Strengths

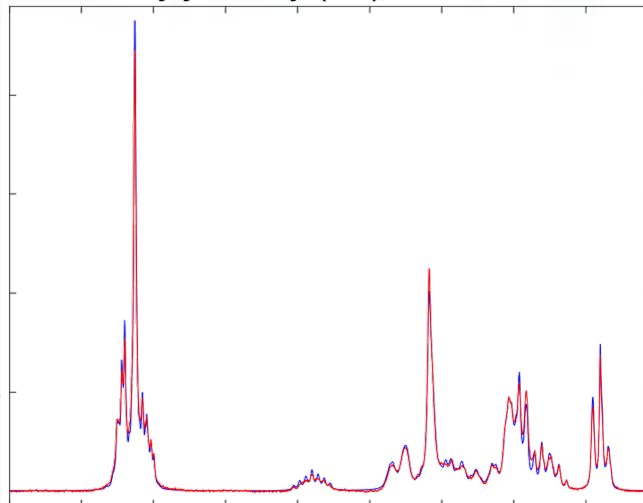


# QMSA Fentalog Translation Examples (600 to 62 MHz)

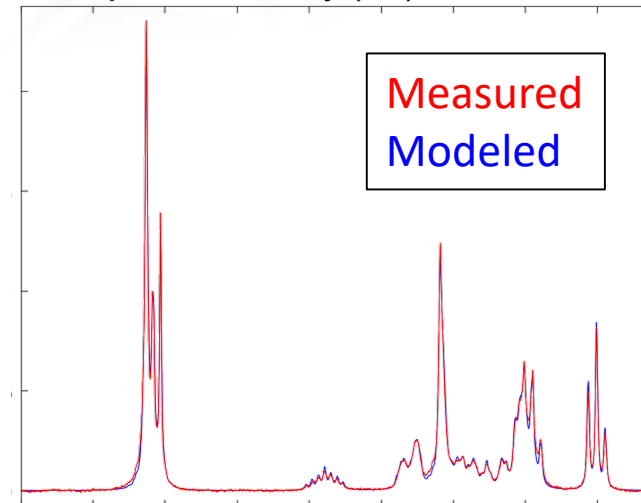
Fentanyl (HCl),  $r^2 = 0.9952$



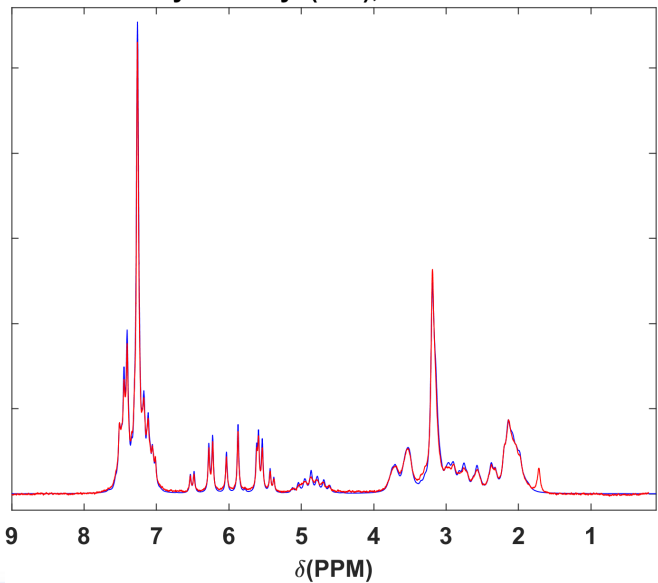
butyryl fentanyl (HCl),  $r^2 = 0.99041$



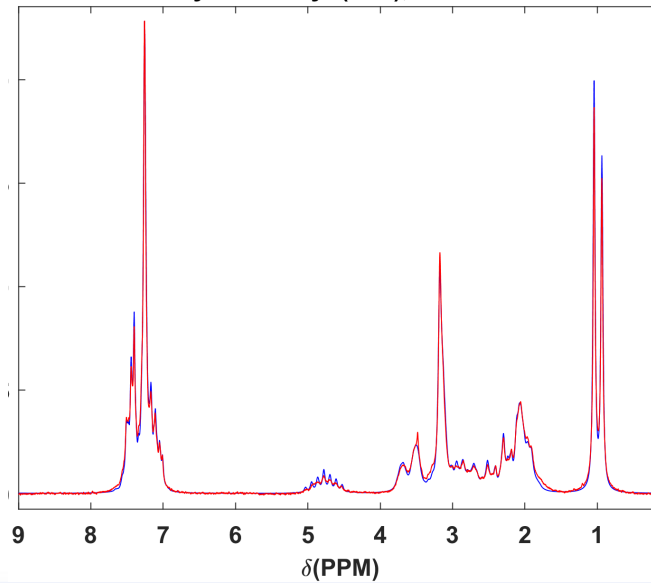
para-fluorofentanyl (HCl),  $r^2 = 0.99522$



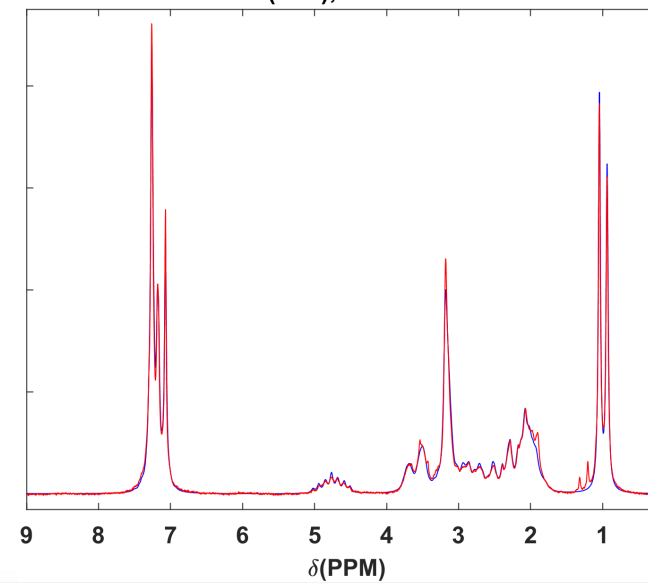
acryl fentanyl (HCl),  $r^2 = 0.99315$



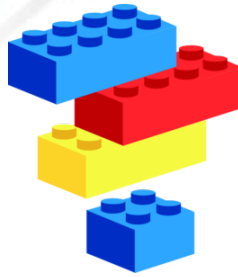
isobutyryl fentanyl (HCl),  $r^2 = 0.99376$



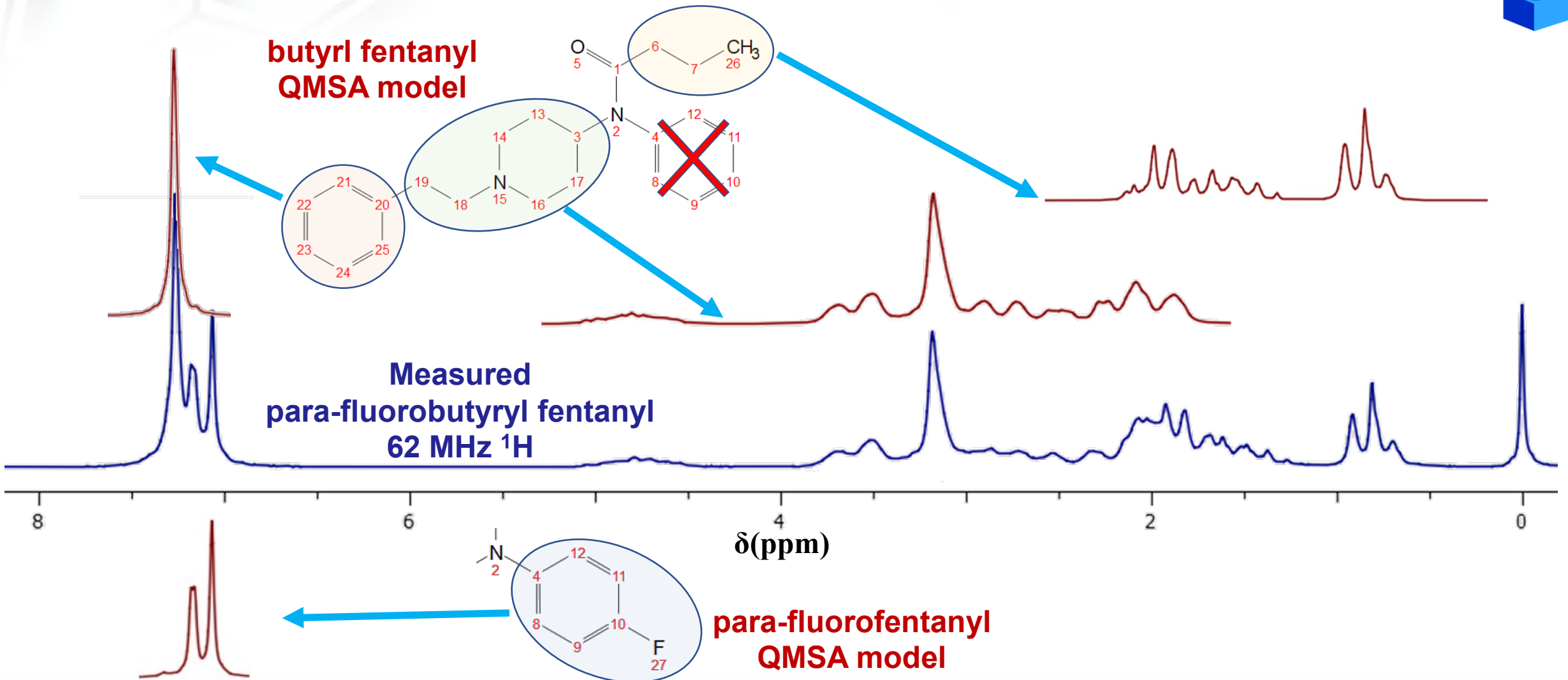
FIBF (HCl),  $r^2 = 0.99032$



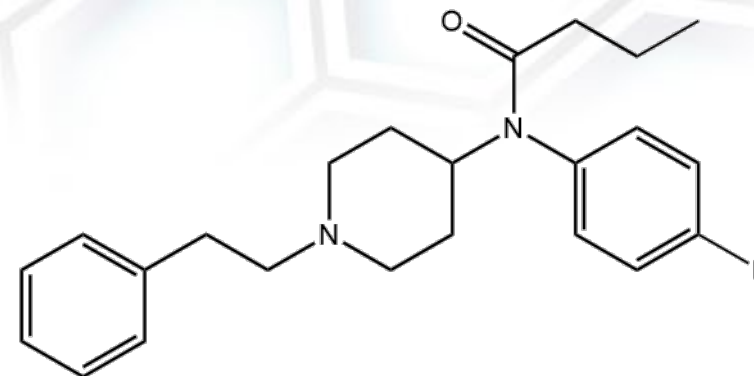
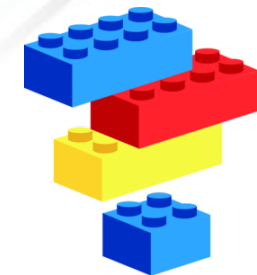
# QMSA Sub-Systems as Spectral Building Blocks



Facilitates building new QMSA models and predicting spectra of unknowns

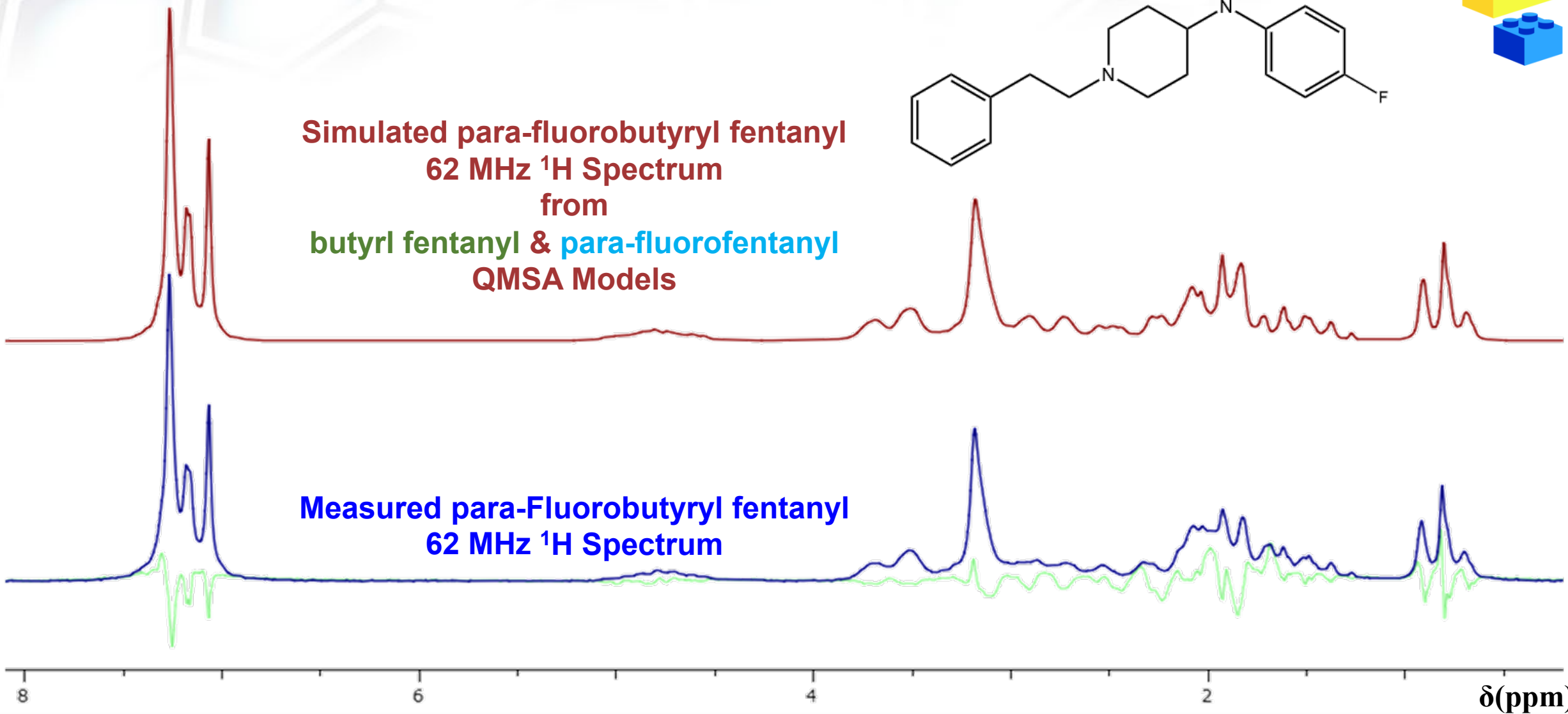


# Bringing it all together.....



**Simulated para-fluorobutyryl fentanyl  
62 MHz <sup>1</sup>H Spectrum  
from  
butyryl fentanyl & para-fluorofentanyl  
QMSA Models**

**Measured para-Fluorobutyryl fentanyl  
62 MHz <sup>1</sup>H Spectrum**

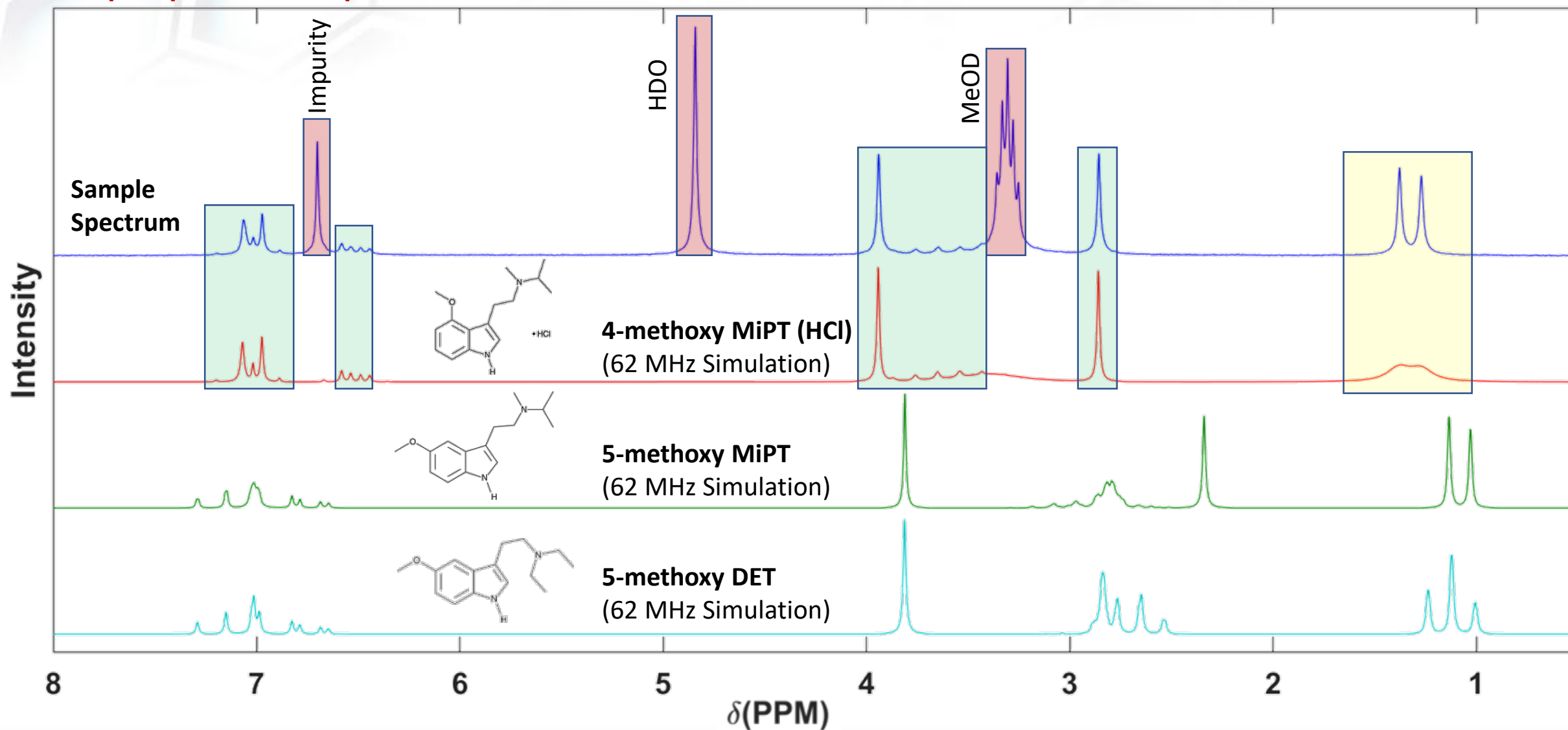


# Outline

- NMR at a Glance
- Benchtop NMR
- Fentanyl Analog Differentiation with  $^1\text{H}$  low-field/benchtop NMR Spectra
- Fluorine ( $^{19}\text{F}$ ) low-field/benchtop NMR
- Quantum Mechanic Spectral Analysis (QMSA) of  $^1\text{H}$  NMR Spectra and translation of  $^1\text{H}$  Spectra Across Magnet Field Strengths
- **Recent Sample Investigations**
- Conclusion & Acknowledgements

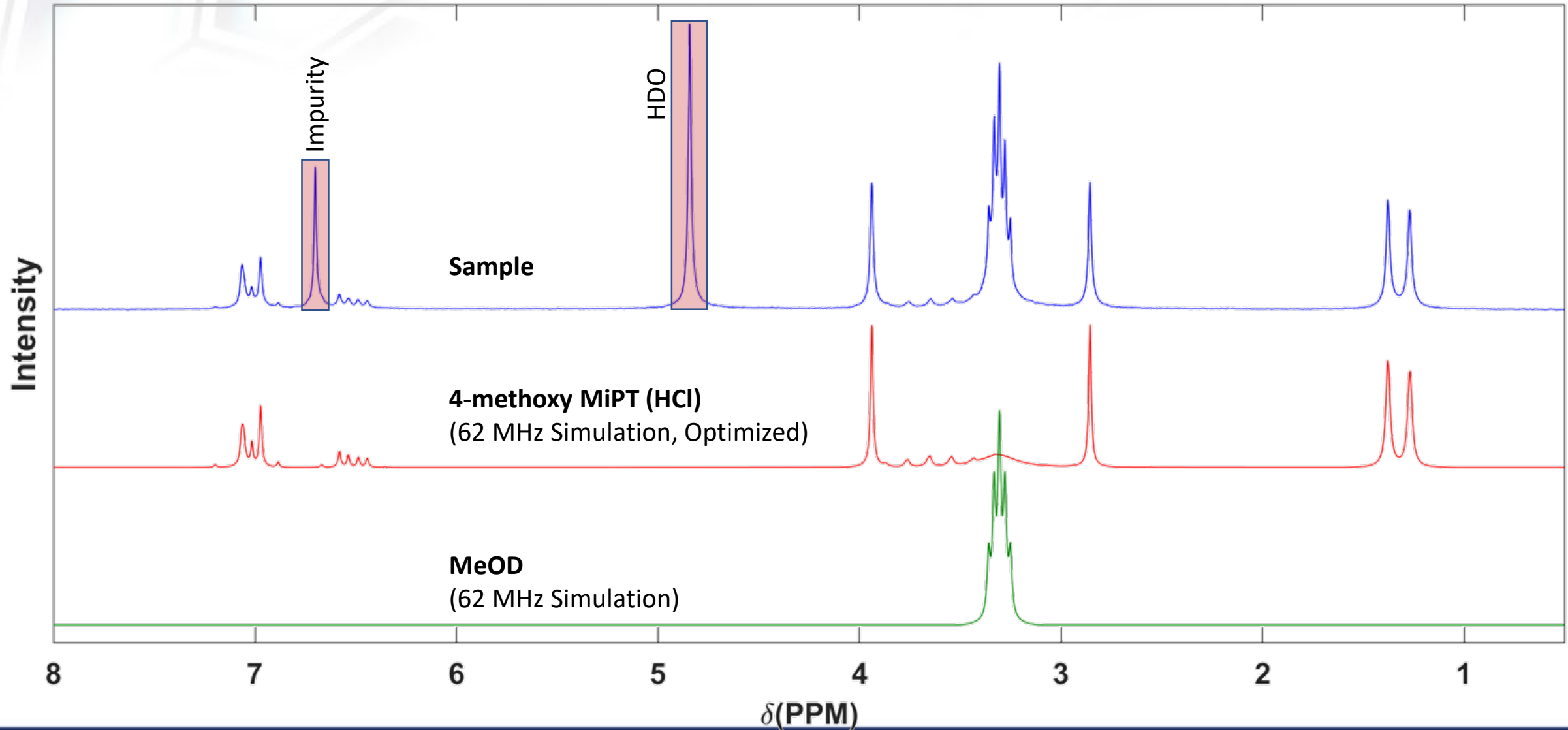
# Synthetic Tryptamine Analog Example 1

Sample Spectrum Compared to 62 MHz QMSA Simulations



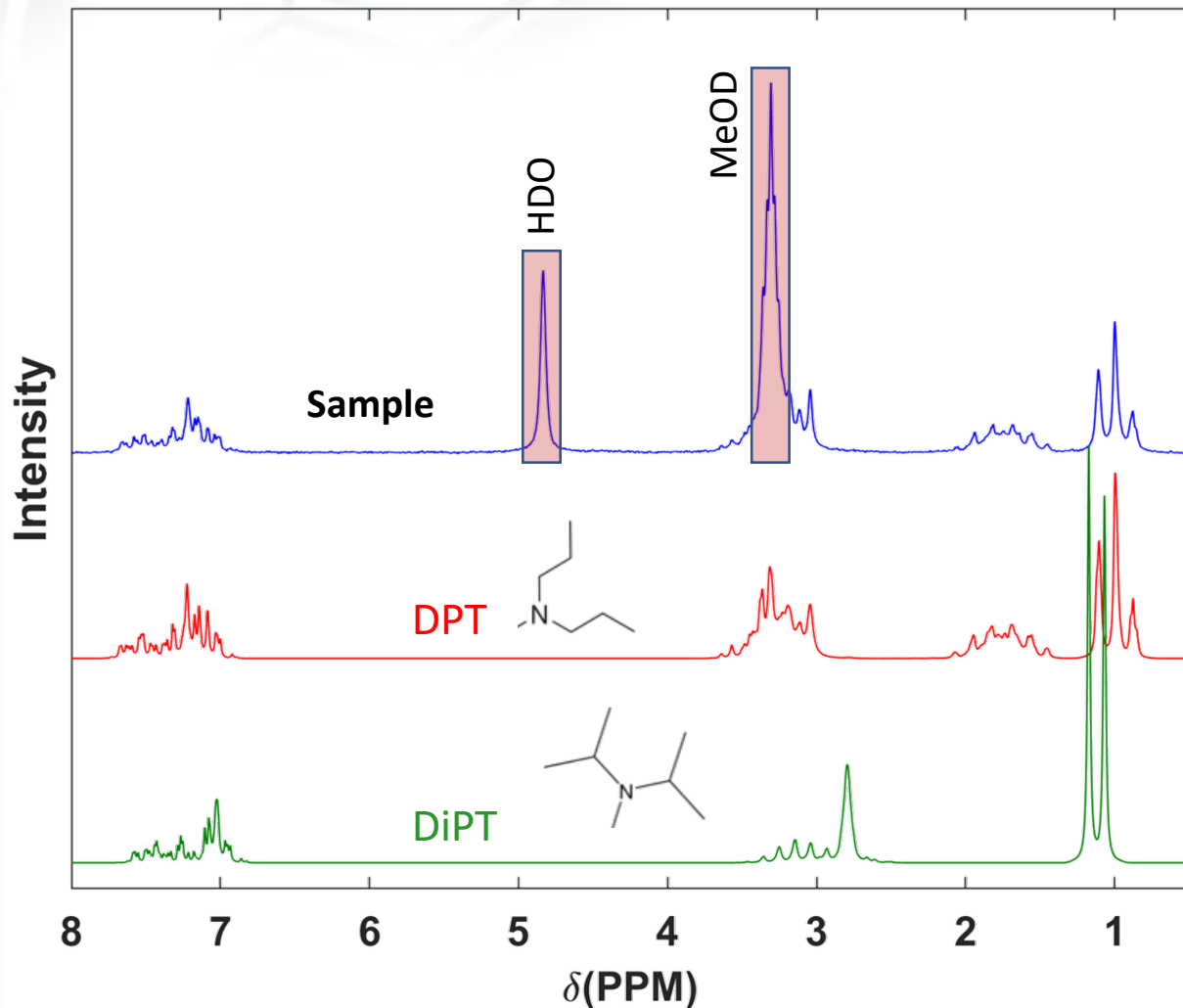
# Synthetic Tryptamine Analog Example 1

62 MHz QMSA Model of Sample Spectrum

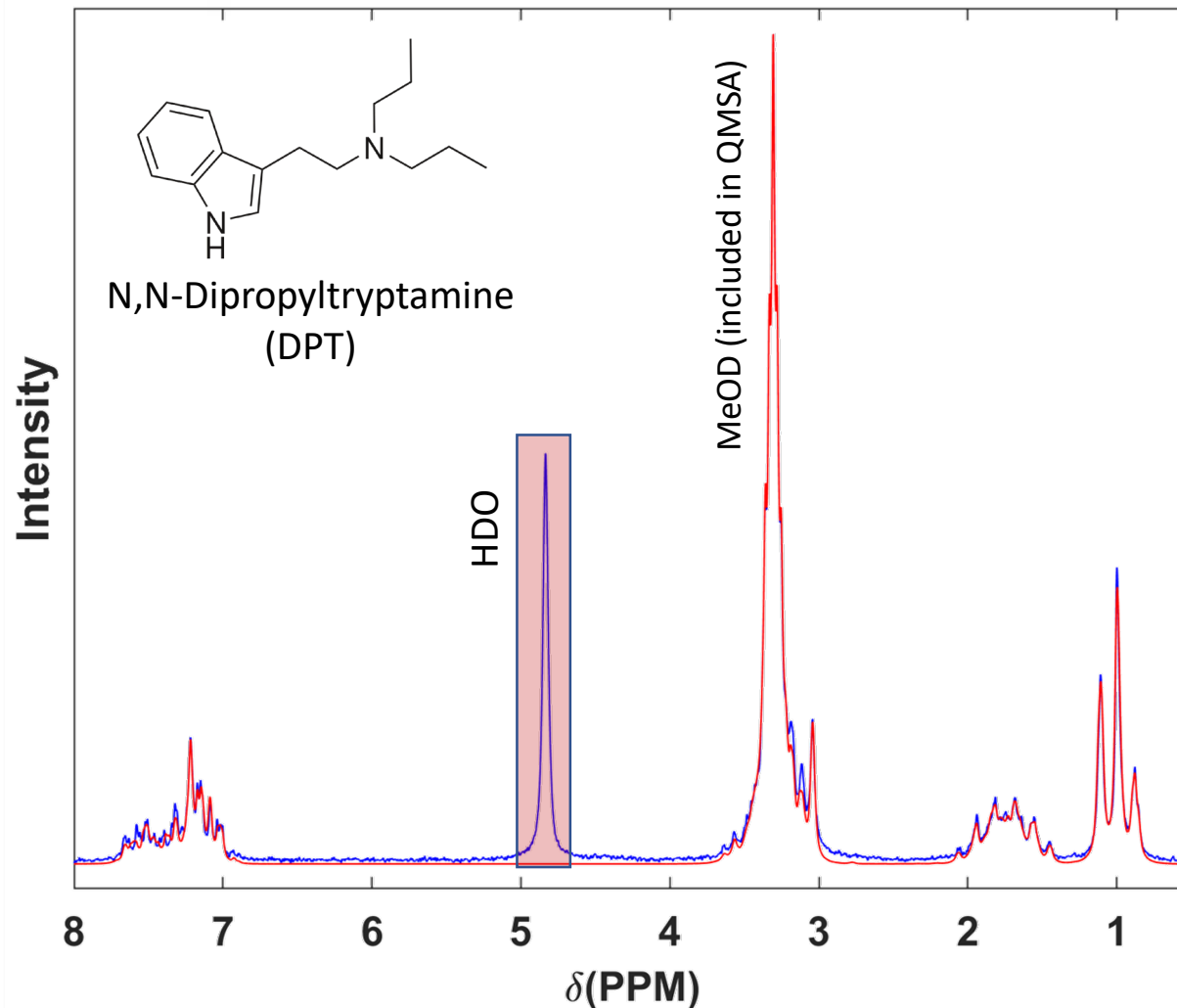


# Synthetic Tryptamine Analog Example 2

## Sample Spectrum Compared to 62 MHz QMSA Simulations



## 62 MHz QMSA Model of Sample Spectrum





# Conclusions & Future Efforts

- Demonstrated that analogs and isomers of fentanyl and some other classes of compounds were readily differentiated using low-field NMR spectroscopy
- Showed how  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR might be useful in the analysis of fluorinated compounds
- Demonstrated the potential utility of quantum mechanic spectral analysis (QMSA) to enable exchange of  $^1\text{H}$  spectra between NMR instruments of different field strengths.

## *Going Forward....*

- Broaden effort to develop QMSA libraries by enlisting collaborators.
- Resolution and sensitivity are significantly reduced at lower magnetic fields. Mixtures are anticipated to be challenging.

## *Going Forward....*

- Explore whether the use of Quantum Mechanic Spectral Analysis (QMSA) will permit effective mixture analysis with low-field NMR. Low-level components (< 5%-10%) would likely be difficult in many situations, though.
- Continue work with forensic lab partners to evaluate “real-world” samples.

# Acknowledgements

- Support from the NIST Special Programs Office
- George Washington University (collaboration on the fentanyl analog project)
  - Ioan Marginean and Jonathan Duffy
- Samples, reference materials or data in the past and present from
  - Maryland State Police Forensic Science Division (Amber Burns)
  - DEA Special Testing and Research Laboratory (Charlotte Corbett)
  - US Postal Inspection Service (Mike Hitchcock)
- QMSA Assistance
  - Matthias Niemitz (NMR Solutions)
  - Pekka and Reino Laatikainen (Spin Discoveries) for assistance with QMSA

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Thank You!