

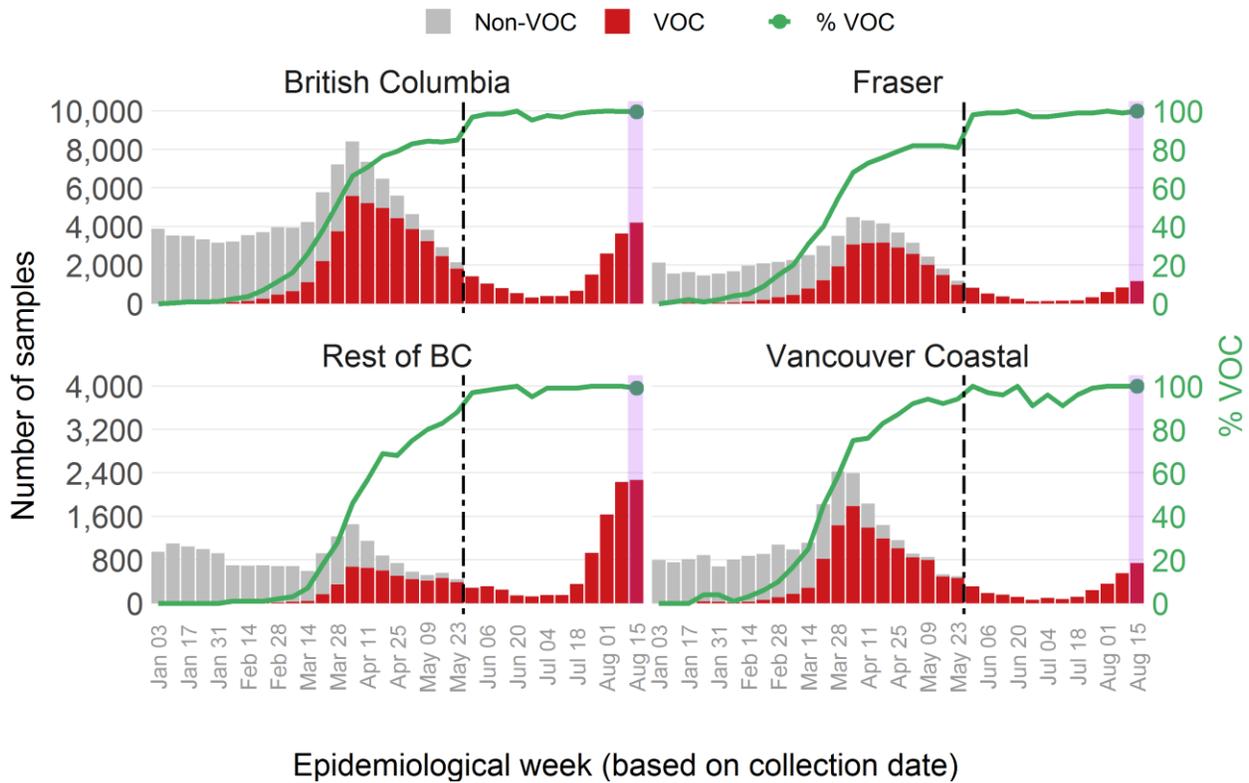
Weekly update on Variants of Concern (VOC)

Aug 27, 2021

Of all positive samples sequenced in epi week 33 (Aug 15 - Aug 21) in BC, ~ 99% were confirmed VOCs (Figure 1). VOC prevalence was similar across Health Authorities.

Data from epi week 33 reflects partial data due to a lag in receipt of positive samples from front line laboratories; estimates are expected to change as more specimens are received and sequenced.

Figure 1. Prevalence of VOC, by epi week in BC and Health Authorities, Aug 15 - Aug 21



Dotted line indicates the time of transition to WGS of all positive samples on May 30, 2021 (epi week 22).

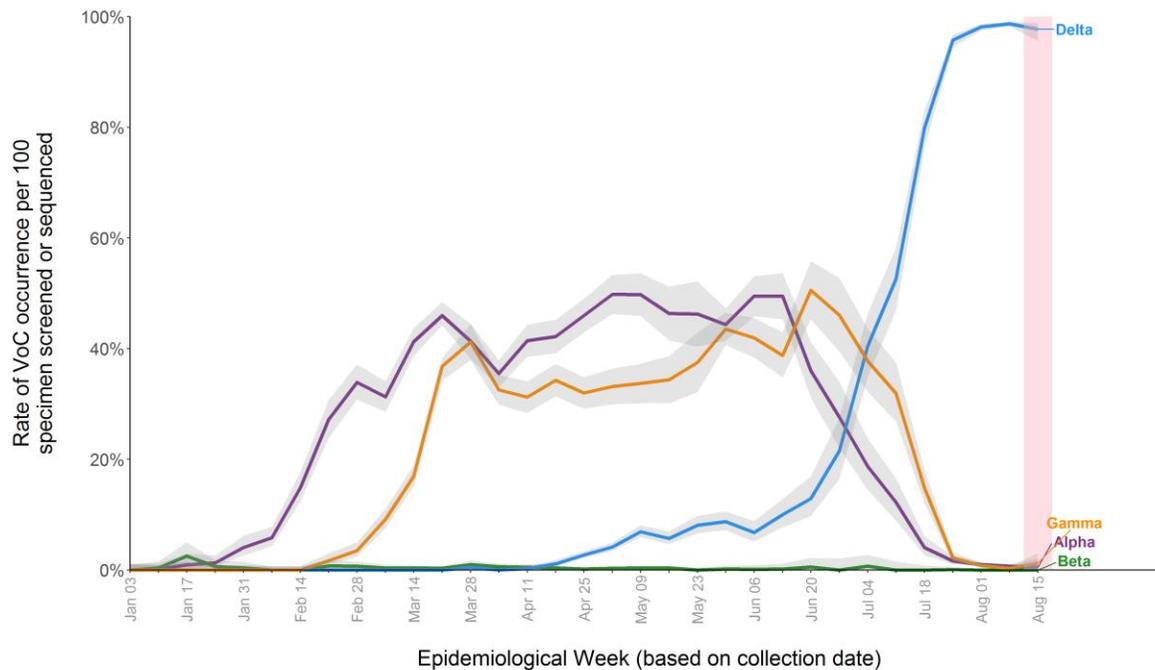
Data from the PLOVER system at the BCCDC Public Health Lab.

Purple shaded box reflects partial data due to the results being available 4-7 days after the sample is received by the BCCDC Public Health Lab, and estimates for the latest epi week may change as more sequencing results come back.

The main circulating variant is Delta, respectively accounting for about 98% of positive specimens sequenced.

Please note that the estimate of distribution of VOC lineage[#](Figure 2) in BC for latest epi week 33 (Aug 15 - Aug 21) may change as more sequencing results are analyzed and given the lag in receipt of positive samples from front line laboratories.

Figure 2. Estimated Sample prevalence[^] of VOCs by lineage by epi week of collection date, Jan 3 - Aug 21, 2021



[^] Sample prevalence is calculated as the rate of occurrence of a given VOC lineage per 100 positive lab samples. It was estimated from the proportion of presumptive VOC from screening and the proportion of confirmed VOC via sequencing (excluding outbreaks and targeted surveillance) until May 30th, 2021 when BC transitioned to WGS on all positive cases. From week 13 (March 28, 2021), VOC screening results with both E484K and N501Y mutations are assumed to be Gamma, given a very low prevalence of Beta in BC. As of week 22 (May 30, 2021), prevalence of VOC is estimated from sequencing results only.

Pink shaded box reflects partial data due to a lag in receipt of positive samples from front line laboratories; estimates are expected to change as more specimens are received and sequenced.

[#] See appendix for the definitions of VOC lineages

Table 1. Sequencing-based VOC prevalence and approximate distribution by VOC lineage in BC and Health Authorities, latest available estimates on epi* week 33 (Aug 15 - Aug 21).

Region	Total positive tests	Sample prevalence** VOCs#			Relative Proportion of VOC***		
		% Alpha	% Delta	% Gamma	% Alpha	% Delta	% Gamma
BC	4208	1	98	1	1	98	1
FHA	1160	1	98	2	1	98	2
IHA	1712	1	99	0	1	99	0
NHA	267	0	93	7	0	93	7
VCH	739	0	99	1	0	99	1
VIHA	302	0	94	0	0	100	0

**Note: Due to the lag in receipt of positive samples from front line laboratories the reported estimates for VoC by Health Authorities are expected to change as more specimens are received and sequenced. Due to rounding, estimates may add to more than 100.*

*** Sample prevalence is calculated as the rate of occurrence of a given VOC lineage per 100 positive lab samples. It is estimated from the proportion of confirmed VOC via sequencing. Note, before epi week 22, sample prevalence was previously calculated using both screening and sequencing data.*

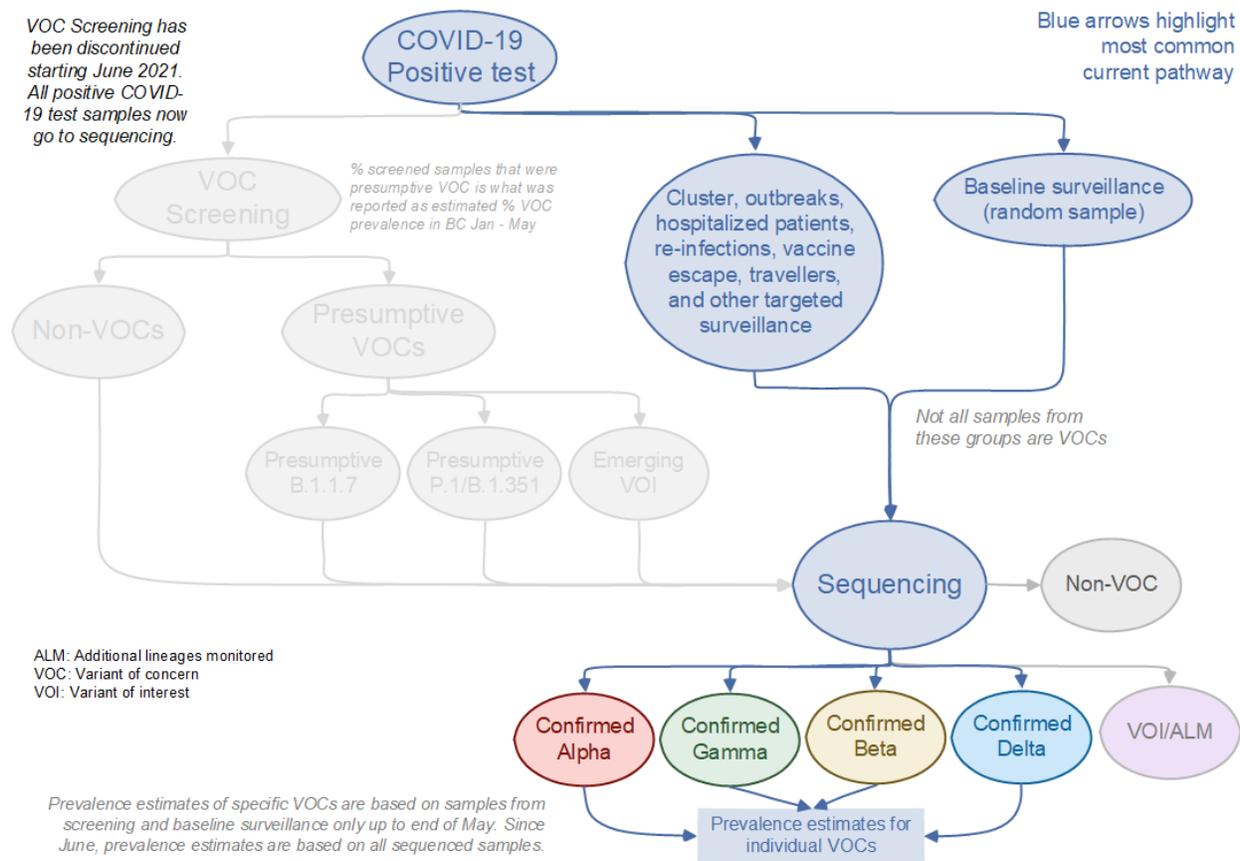
****Relative Proportion from the total VOC identified through sequencing. The proportion for Beta not shown in this table due to small numbers.*

See appendix for the definitions of VOC lineages

Variants of Interests (VOI)

As illustrated in Figure 3 below, BCCDC Public Health Lab is continuously monitoring for both VOCs and VOIs. There are numerous VOIs, and they may not necessarily become VOCs. Once a VOI becomes a VOC, it will be added to our VOC reporting.

Figure 3. Overview of the screening and sequencing process applied to positive COVID-19 tests in BC, August 2021.



Please note the turnaround time sequencing which takes approximately 4-7 days, but it could also take longer if there are lab backlogs or if there are delays in receiving current positive samples from front line laboratories. *

Whole genome sequencing (WGS)

Whole genome sequencing (Illumina only) was performed on 60,908 specimens up to epi week 33 (Aug 15 - Aug 21) in BC, of which 39,513 came back as variants under closer observation. Table 2 below presents the number of variant samples sequenced; it does not represent the number of variant COVID cases. As illustrated in Figure 3 above, BC has transitioned to whole genome sequencing on all positive samples.

Table 2: Frequencies of SARS-CoV-2 monitored genetic lineages confirmed by WGS.

Identified Lineage* (Pangolin version 3.1.11/ PangoLEARN2021-08-09)	Nomenclature	Category**	First Detected/Alternate Name	TOTAL	% Change since last report
B.1.1.7	Alpha	VOC	UK	14965	0.1
B.1.351	Beta	VOC	South Africa	159	-1.3
B.1.351.X#	Beta	VOC	South Africa	2	
P.1	Gamma	VOC	Brazil/Japan	11656	0.2
P.1.X#	Gamma	VOC	Brazil	222	
B.1.617.2	Delta	VOC	India	10399	39.8
AY.X#	Delta	VOC	India	349	
B.1.617.1	Kappa	VOI	India	401	-0.2
B.1.617.3		VOI	India	3	-33.3
A.23.1		VOI	TBC	35	0.0
B.1.427	Epsilon	VOI	California, USA	4	0.0
B.1.429	Epsilon	VOI	California, USA	829	0.0
B.1.1.318		VOI	Switzerland	19	5.3
B.1.616		VOI	France	0	
B.1.526	Iota	VOI	New York, USA	12	0.0
B.1.526.1	Iota	VOI	New York, USA	0	
B.1.525	Eta	VOI	Nigeria	151	-1.3
C.37	Lambda	VOI	Chile	1	0.0
P.2	Zeta	VOI	Brazil	193	0.0
P.3	Theta	VOI	Philippines	4	0.0
B.1.621		VOI	Columbia	41	22.0
B.1.621.1		VOI	Columbia	2	0.0
B.1.618		ALM	India	45	-2.2
TOTAL				39513	11.0

** Lineage assignments are based on the use of Pangolin, an epidemiological lineage assignment tool (github.com/cov-lineages/pangolin); these may change with time as new SARS-CoV-2 genomic data becomes available.*

Please note that updates of the Pangolin tool may also result in the refinement of lineage and sublineage designations. See appendix for the definitions of VOC lineages

*** Variant category includes: Variant of Concern (VoC), Variant of Interest (VoI) and Additional Lineages Monitored (ALM).*

Appendix – VOC Lineages Table

VOC	Associated Lineages
Alpha	B.1.1.7, Q.*
Beta	B.1.351, B.1.351.*
Gamma	P.1, P.1.*
Delta	B.1.617.2, AY.*

** asterisk indicates an additional numerical value (e.g. Q.1).*